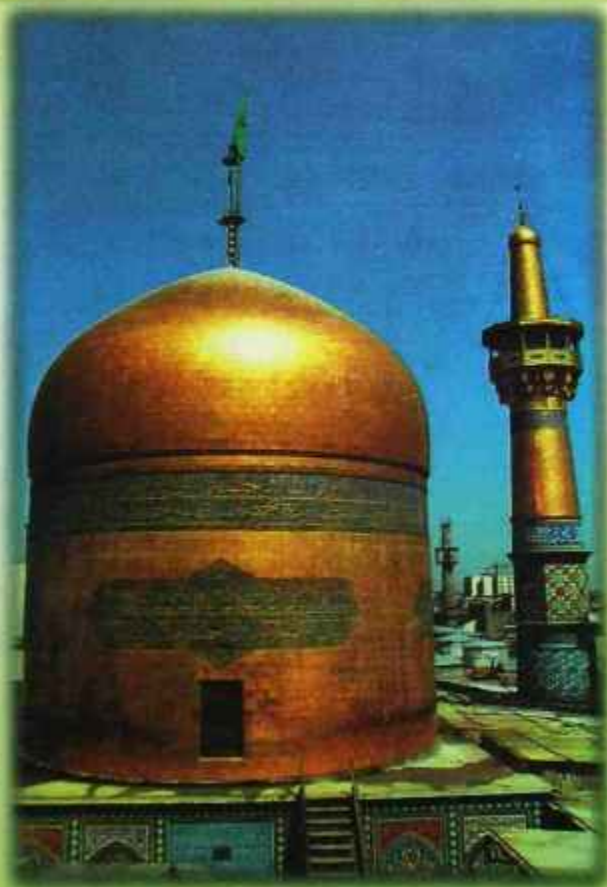


IMAM REZA (A.S.)

AND

HISTORY OF THE HOLY SHRINE



Mahmoud Mahuwan
M.Ali Iman-Doust

Translated by: Ali Khorasani
Edited by: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

. halloo
2003



11/13



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قال رسول الله (ﷺ): سَتُدْفَنُ بَضْعَةٌ مِنِّي
 بِأَرْضِ خُرَاسَانَ، لَا يَزُورُهَا مُؤْمِنٌ إِلَّا أَوْجَبَ
 اللَّهُ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ - لَهُ الْجَنَّةَ وَحَرَّمَ جَسَدَهُ عَلَى النَّارِ.

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The Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said:

One of my own flesh and blood will shortly be buried in the land of Khorasan: no believer will visit him but that Allah (Glorified and Majestic) will make Heaven obligatory for him and will render immune his body from hell fire.

إهداء

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AND
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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE
MERCIFUL

"Say: Surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds"
(Holy Qur'an 6:163)

All Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, Who favoured and guided this humble soul in the translation of this book. This is my first work of translation, and I hope it would be accepted by the blessed subject of this book, Imam Reza (A.S.), and the Last Saviour of mankind, Imam Mahdi (A.S.) -- may Almighty Allah hasten his re-appearance.

During my stay in the holy city of Mashhad, I thought of preparing a book on the life of the Eighth Imam and the history of his holy shrine. I was in search of material in this regard when, by the Grace of Almighty Allah, I came across a brief but quite informative book in Persian by Mahmoud Mahuwan and Mahmoud Ali Bafande Imam-Doust titled *A cursory Glance at the Life of Imam Reza (A.S.) and an Introduction to the Blessed Sites at the*

Holy Shrine. The original title being lengthy, I decided to shorten it to *Imam Reza (A.S.) and History of the Holy Shrine* for the English translation.

I immediately started translating the book into English so that it might be convenient information for the thousands of pilgrims that visit Imam Reza's (A.S.) shrine every year from abroad who, due to their lack of acquaintance with the Persian language, find most of their queries on the reasons behind the martyrdom of the Eighth Imam in Khorasan or the history of the shrine, unfulfilled.

I would like to thank brother Seyyed Ali Shahbaz, for editing this book. I appreciate his untiring efforts to make this book exquisitely presentable and in adding the necessary footnotes for the benefit of readers. I am also grateful to brothers, Shuja Ali Mirza, Ahmed Haneef, and Muhammad Mahdi Parsaei, for their timely suggestions and sincere efforts towards the publication of this book. I also appreciate the help extended by Mr. Ali Asghar Farzaneh, the Director of Creative Arts Department of the Holy Shrine who provided the necessary photographs.

For the convenience of the pilgrims, the standard form of salutations or *Ziyarat* of Imam Reza (A.S.), along with its English translation has been added as an appendix.

I am sure that the followers of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) and his infallible Ahl-ul-Bait, will benefit from this book. I also apologize for any possible errors that might have occurred in this book.

In conclusion, I pray to Almighty Allah to give us strength, and help us in leading pious lives by following the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) and his infallible progeny. I also pray for the re-appearance of the

Imam of the Age, Hazrat Mahdi (A.S.), for establishing the rule of justice and equity in this world and delivering mankind from oppression. Amen.

Mirza Muhammad Ali Khorasani - Tehran - 1997

PREFACE

On tourist maps of the world, holy sites are recognized as places of prime attraction. In Islamic Iran, Mashhad (capital of Khorasan Province) is recognized as the holiest site of pilgrimage, where every year millions of people from throughout Iran and from around the world come to pay their respects at the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) -- the Eighth infallible Imam of Prophet Muhammad's (S.A.W.A.) Household.

Islam highly recommends visits to the holy shrine of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) and that of the infallible Imams, and to recite salutations in the prescribed manner. By forging such spiritual links, pilgrims find solace and get an opportunity to contemplate and mould their lives on the examples set by these pure souls.

The Mahuwan Geographical Institute and Publications, has done its best over the past few years in introducing holy sites in Iran to pilgrims, and this book is the third in a series of works compiled by the Late Mahmoud Mahuwan, the founder of the Institute. His other two works published by the Institute are *A Guide to Mashhad* and *A Guide to Khorasan*.

In the present book, Part One takes a cursory glance at the life of Imam Reza (A.S.), while Part Two is a brief and informative outline of the blessed sites surrounding the shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.).

Mahuwan Geographical Institute and Publications.
Spring 1996

PART I

**A GLANCE AT THE
LIFE OF IMAM REZA
(A.S.)**

1. Birth of Imam Reza (A.S.)

Imam Reza (A.S.) was born on Friday, the 11th of Zu'l-Qa'dah, in 148 AH (765 AD) in Medina. His father was the Seventh infallible Imam, Musa al-Kazem (A.S.), and his mother, the Lady Taktum (also known as Najma), was of Berber origin from North Africa. After the birth of Imam Reza (A.S.) she was often referred to as *Tahera* or the 'Pure'.

His name was Ali, and his '*Kunya*' was Abu'l-Hassan, and his most famous epithet was 'Reza'. His son and successor Imam Jawad (A.S.), has said in this regard that Allah chose the epithet '*Reza*' because the Eighth Imam, in his time was the most beloved creature of Allah in the heavens, while on earth not only were the Prophet and the Imams pleased (*razi*) with him but his friends and foes alike agreed (*razi*) with his Imamate and acknowledged his great spiritual power and superiority.

Imam Reza's (A.S.) other famous titles were: Saber, Sadeq, Fazel, Razee, Wafi, Zamin, Raouf, Gharib-ul-Ghuraba, Shams-ash-Shamus and Alim-e Aal-e Muhammad.

2. His Imamate During Harun ar-Rashid's Rule

Imam Reza (A.S.) grew up under the auspices of his father at a time when the Abbasid usurpers, Mansur, Mahdi, Hadi and Harun ruled the Islamic state in succession. In the year 179 AH (795 AD), due to Imam Musa al-Kazem's (A.S.) unending struggle against the cruel ruler, Imam Reza (A.S.) saw his noble father arrested and taken to Iraq on the orders of Harun.

Four years later on 6th Rajab 183 AH (799 AD), the seventh Imam was poisoned and martyred by Sindi bin Shahik at Baghdad on the instructions of the cruel caliph, and was laid to rest in the graveyard of the Quraysh, which eventually became a venerated pilgrim site called Kazemain. The mantle of Imamate, the divinely-designated leadership of mankind, thus fell on the shoulders of Imam Reza (A.S.), when he was 35 years of age.

For the next ten years Imam Reza (A.S.) expounded the sciences of Islam and guided his followers in Medina. At that time Harun used to torture the descendants of the Prophet (*Saadaats*) and the Alavis,¹ most of whom he had either thrown in dungeons or had martyred. Harun many times tried to assassinate Imam Reza (A.S.) but by the grace of Almighty Allah his plans failed every time.

1. The word "*Saadaat*" is reserved for the Prophet's direct descendants through his daughter Hazrat Fatima (S.A.), while the sons and descendants of Imam Ali (A.S.) through wives other than Hazrat Fatima (S.A.) are called *Alids* or *Alavis*, a term which is often collectively used for *Saadaats* as well. *Editor*.

In the year 193 AH (809 AD) Harun, despite his deteriorating health, started towards Khorasan along with his son Mamun, to crush the uprising of Rafe' bin Laith bin Nasr bin Sayyar and Hamza bin Abdullah Khareji, leaving his elder son Muhammad Amin in his own place in Baghdad. Harun's health, however became worse in Khorasan and he died near Tus and was buried in the palace of Hamid bin Qahtaba at Sanabad. His son Mamun who took over the command of the army, soon built a dome over his father's grave, and it was under this dome that Imam Reza (A.S.) was to be laid to rest when he was martyred by the Abbasid caliph, some years later.

3. His Imamate During Amin's Rule

Harun ar-Rashid was succeeded by his son Muhammad Amin who was a very cruel, vicious and incompetent ruler. On his accession he immediately wrote a letter to his brother Mamun who was in Merv in Khorasan, demanding that he pledge an oath of allegiance to him. But Mamun was advised by his crafty minister Fazl bin Sahl to refuse Amin's request.

Meantime, in the year 195 AH (811 AD), Almighty Allah granted a son to Imam Reza (A.S.), who named him Muhammad (the future Imam Jawad).

When Mamun refused to accept the caliphate of his brother, the latter dispatched Ali bin 'Isa Mahan from Baghdad to Merv to fight Mamun.

Mamun sent Taher bin Hussain bin Mus'ab al-Khuzaie (Taher - Zu'l-Yaminain) to fight against

Muhammad Amin's forces, who were overpowered in the encounter with many of them defecting to Mamun's army. Five years later, in the year 198 AH (814 AD), the army of Zu'l-Yaminain besieged Baghdad, defeated Amin and after severing his head from his body, proclaimed Mamun as the sole Abbasid caliph.

4. His Imamate During Mamun's Rule

The Iranians were always given special importance by the Abbasid rulers, since their chief partisans such as Abu Muslim Khorasani, the Barmakids and the family of Sahl and Taher Zu'l-Yaminain were Iranians. Mamun's own mother Marajel was an Iranian slave-girl, and since he was supported by the Iranians in his fight against his step-brother Amin, he selected Khorasan as the seat of his caliphate, with Merv (in present day Turkmenistan) as his capital city.

Mamun, however, was faced with a very tense political crisis. After the defeat and killing of Amin, the Alavis, feeling respite from the frequent persecutions and torture of the caliphs, and realizing that the new capital, Merv, was in far away Khorasan, felt secure enough to start their revolutionary activities throughout the Islamic lands against Abbasid rule. In addition to this, in Baghdad, some of Amin's die-hard followers were strongly against Mamun.

The new caliph realized the political situation and after consultations with Fazl bin Sahl, came up with an intricate plan to nominate Imam Reza (A.S.) as his heir-apparent in view of the popularity of the Imam among the

Muslims as well as the high esteem, respect and honour that this infallible descendent of the Prophet held among both the Alavis and the Abbasids.

The reason behind Imam Reza's (A.S.) selection by Mamun was to meet his ambitious political goals which can be classified as follows:

1. To consolidate his shaky rule.
2. To empower the government apparatus.
3. To play to the sentiments of both parties --Alavis and Abbasids.
4. To prevent the masses from swearing allegiance to Imam Reza (A.S.) in Medina as the rightful leader (he intended to keep the Imam under his control in Merv).
5. To legitimize the caliphate, since any acceptance from Imam Reza (A.S.) would bring popular support for his rule.
6. To make people think that the caliphate and the Imamate were of the same essence.
7. To demonstrate his power and warn Abbasids opposed to his rule of the consequences of breaking their covenant with him.
8. To show that the Alavis lacked political power and leadership.
9. To destroy the socio-religious appeal and charisma of the Alavis among the masses by involving them into politics.

Mamun, in fact, wanted to tarnish the image of the Imams of the Prophet's Household, by attempting to show that the Imams were after worldly power and were not spiritual, and that when offered the reins of temporal rule they would grab at the chance.

In view of his past experience, he had come to the conclusion that the main reasons behind the failure of the Omayyad and Abbasid caliphs in the struggle against the Alavis, were the piety and justice of the infallible Imams, factors which attracted popular support in confrontation with the rulers. He thought that the popularity of the Alavis among the masses was because they remained untainted by the politics of mischief. He thus planned, that by involving the Alavis into politics and by making people aware of their subsequent actions, he could undermine their religious popularity and the respect they held in society.

Although, after the nomination of Imam Reza (A.S.) as his successor, Mamun to some extent succeeded in his sinister designs, he utterly failed in his bid to portray the Imamate as synonymous with the caliphate. As a result, the people grew in their love for the Alavis whose political influence and leadership became stronger still.

5. Imam Reza's (A.S.) Journey from Medina to Merv

In the year 200 AH (816 AD), Mamun sent his maternal uncle Reja bin Zahhak from Merv to Medina with flattering letters of invitation for Imam Reza (A.S.) and a group of other Alavis and revolutionaries, to come to Merv. He also gave instructions to his uncle to show the utmost respect to Imam Reza (A.S.) and invite him to Khorasan.

Imam Reza (A.S.), being aware of Mamun's real intentions and the outcome of his journey to Khorasan, initially declined the invitation politely. But, following Reja's continuous insistence and taking into account the

affairs of Muslims, the Imam had no other choice but to reluctantly accept Mamun's invitation.

The Imam bade farewell to the shrine of his ancestor the Prophet in a highly emotional state, and according to some versions, departed for Mecca to perform the Hajj pilgrimage.² Mamun, in his letter to Imam Reza (A.S.), told him not to plan his journey to Khorasan via the cities of Kufa (in Iraq) and Qom (in north-central Iran), because he dreaded the idea of Shias getting in touch with the Imam and asking him to abandon his journey.

Imam Reza (A.S.) left Hijaz for Iraq and after passing through Basra, he travelled by ship to the port known as Khorramshahr today, and from there he went to Ahwaz. His route next lay through the central Iranian cities of Isfahan and Yazd. From there he went to Tabas, and after passing the Ahuwan region and Miyame, he entered the ancient city of Nishabur.

2. Before departure from Medina, Imam Reza (A.S.) gathered his companions and other members of the Prophet's Household, and told them that his young son, Muhammad al-Jawad (A.S.), was his successor after him and should be obeyed in all matters --Ibn Shahr Ashoub in *Manaqeb* and al-Masoudi in *Ashaat al-Wasiya*.

Regarding the succession to the Imamate in childhood by the ninth Imam, it is interesting to note that Shaykh Mufid has recorded the following account in his *'Kitab al-Irshad'*:

"I (Safwan bin Yahya) said to ar-Reza (A.S.): ...We ask Allah never to show us the day (of your death) but if something happened, to whom (will the Imamate belong)? He (the Imam) pointed out to Abu Ja'far (his son, the future Imam Jawad) with his hand while he was standing in front of him. I said: May I be your ransom, this is a child of three years old! That does not harm him, he (the Imam) replied, Jesus gave evidence (of his mission) when he was less than three years old." *Editor*.

6. Imam Reza's (A.S.) Arrival in Nishabur

In the time of Imam Reza (A.S.), Nishabur was a famous center of learning in Khorasan and was full of scholars. As the news of the Imam's (A.S.) arrival spread through Nishabur, tens of thousands of people from all walks of life, including scholars and scientists, gathered on the outskirts of the city to welcome the Prophet's noble descendant. The multitude jostled with each other to have a glimpse of the Imam's spiritual and radiant face, as the grandson of the Prophet entered the city of Nishabur in ordinary clothes but with a dignified appearance.

Two of the city's prominent *'ulema*, Abu Zar'a and Muhammad bin Aslam Tusi, went near the camel on which the Imam was riding and after salutations, requested that he narrate a tradition on the chain of authority of his illustrious forbears so that they could learn it from his memorable self and keep alive the memory of his historical journey. It is said that about 24,000 scholars gathered around the camel with pen and paper to record the Imam's blessed words.

After a brief pause, Imam Reza (A.S.), narrated the famous tradition known ever since as '*Hadith Silsilat-az-Zahab*' or the 'Golden Chain of Authority', saying: *'My father Imam Musa al-Kazem (A.S.), told me that he heard from his father Imam Jafar as-Sadeq (A.S.), who heard from his father Imam Muhammad al-Baqer (A.S.), who heard from his father Imam Ali ibn al-Hussain (A.S.), who heard from his father Imam Hussain ibn Ali (A.S.), who heard from his father Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (A.S.), who*

heard from Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) who heard from Archangel Gabriel, who heard from Almighty Allah, Who said: the testimony La ilaha ill-Allah (there is no god except Allah) is My impregnable fortress and whoever enters My fortress is safe from My wrath".

In fact, Imam Reza's (A.S.) saying was the same declaration of the principle of *Tawheed* (Monotheism or the Oneness of God) which Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) had proclaimed in Mecca for the first time over two centuries ago.

The Imam stayed silent for a while then continued: *"But it (entering Allah's impregnable fortress) has certain conditions and stipulations, and I am one of those conditions."*³

In other words, Imam Reza (A.S.), by emphasizing on this *Hadith Qudsi*, meant to say that acceptance of the 'Oneness of God' and the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) and the infallible Imams of his Household, was the prime condition for being safe from Divine Wrath. In fact, the belief in Monotheism will only become complete with the acceptance of the leadership of the Prophet's infallible Household.

3. Refer to '*Tarikh Nishabur*' and also to the famous Sunni scholar Ibn Sabbagh al-Maleki's '*Fusoul al-Muhimma*'. This *Hadith* has been transmitted by scholars of various denominations. Abu'l-Qasem Qasheeri relates that when this *Hadith* was recited with its blessed chain of authority to one of the Samanid kings of Bukhara, he ordered it to be inscribed in letters of gold, and also had it written on his shroud. His instructions were carried out, and after his death he appeared in the dream of one of the scholars and said that because of the *Hadith Silsalat az-Zahab*, Allah the Merciful had forgiven him.
Editor.

Imam Reza (A.S.) thereafter left Nishabur and proceeded towards Merv, passing through the place which is known to this day as *Qadamgah*⁴ --since it still bears the footprint of the Eighth Imam. From Dah Sorkh village, he arrived in Sanabad, where he stayed in Hamid bin Qahtaba's palace and saw Harun's grave. On entering the dome, under which lay Harun's remains, the Imam marked a spot with his blessed hand, saying: *"I will be buried here, and Almighty Allah will make this place a site of pilgrimage for my Shias (followers) and my friends. By Allah, whoever comes for my pilgrimage and recites salutations (Ziyarat) upon me, will be guaranteed divine mercy and forgiveness by virtue of the intercession of our family (Prophet's Household)."*

After two days of stay, Imam Reza (A.S.) left Sanabad for Merv by way of Sarakhs.⁵

4 Qadamgah lies 23 kms northeast of Nishabur and is a regular spot on the itinerary of pilgrims visiting Mashhad. According to the accounts of the journey, Imam Reza (A.S.) stopped at a spring, besides which he performed the prayer. After the prayer, the impression of his feet miraculously appeared on the stone where he stood. Later, the faithful built a dome besides the spring and installed the impression of the Imam's feet in its southern wall. The present building dates from the Safavid period.

A similar impression of the Imam's feet is preserved in the shrine of Imamzada Muhammad Mahrouq in Nishabur, which seems to suggest that a miracle also took place while Imam Reza (A.S.) passed through that city. *Editor.*

5. On his way to Tus from Dah Sorkh, Imam Reza (A.S.) rested awhile at the mountain called 'Kuh Sangi', and as mentioned by Shaykh Sadouq in '*Uyun Akhbar ar-Reza*', he prayed to Allah to bless the mountain for the benefit of the local people. He then called for carving a pot from its soft black stone and preparing food in it for

7. Imam Reza's (A.S.) Arrival in Merv

In Mamun's time, Merv was one of the biggest cities of Khorasan and the capital of the Abbasid caliphate. On Mamun's invitation about 300,000 people, among them 33,000 partisans of the Abbasids as well as some Hashemites, had assembled in the city to accord a grand welcome to Imam Reza (A.S.), since the caliph had made known his decision to appoint the Imam as his heir-apparent.

Mamun himself, along with his *vazir* Fazl bin Sahl, and with government officials and troops arranged in ranks went to the outskirts of Merv to welcome Imam Reza (A.S.).

Imam Reza (A.S.) and his caravan entered Merv on 12th of Shawwal, 201 AH. (817 AD), to a warm welcome from the people who showered him with the customary salutations and '*Salawat*' (O Allah bless Muhammad and his pure progeny). The city of Merv was a picture of joy as people celebrated the arrival of Prophet Muhammad's (S.A.W.A.) grandson in their midst. The whole city was decorated for the occasion.

8. Mamun's Offer of the Caliphate to Imam Reza (A.S.)

Shortly after Imam Reza's (A.S.) arrival in Merv, Mamun said to him: "O son of the Prophet, I acknowledge

him. Today, as any visitor to Mashhad knows, with the blessings of the Imam, pots, utensils and handicrafts, are still made from the soft black stone of Kuh Sāngi, which continues to provide a source of income for the local people. *Editor.*

your esteemed station, your knowledge, your piety and your worship, and I regard you more worthy of the caliphate than myself. Therefore, I wish to relinquish the caliphate and pay allegiance to you."

The Imam, aware of the elaborately hatched plot, gave a curt reply which confounded Mamun's plans. He said: "If this caliphate is your right then it is not rightful for you to relinquish it and pass it on to someone else. And if it is not your right then how can you give a thing which does not belong to you to someone else?"

Mamun tried his best for two months, both in person and by flattering letters, to convince Imam Reza (A.S.) to accept the caliphate, but to no avail.

It should be remembered that Mamun was an unscrupulous person, who, to acquire the caliphate, had killed his own brother Amin. It is obvious, that a person hungry as he was for the caliphate and worldly power would not willingly hand it over to the Imam. It was clear that there was an ulterior motive behind his repeated requests.

9. Mamun's Offer of Successorship to Imam Reza (A.S.)

Seeing that the Imam was unwilling to take the bait, Mamun thought of another plan and on the second day of Ramadhan in the year 201 AH (817 AD) he said to Imam Reza (A.S.): "Since you have refused to accept my offer of caliphate and you do not want me to swear allegiance to you, then accept being my 'heir' so that after me you can be the rightful caliph."

Imam Reza (A.S.), turned this offer down also. However, after repeated insistence from Mamun, coupled with veiled threats, Imam Reza (A.S.) decided to accept the new proposal on condition that he will not appoint anyone to any post, dismiss anyone from his post nor will he interfere in government affairs.

Mamun thought that he had finally succeeded in his plan, and the first thing he did after the Imam's acceptance of the offer, was to immediately dismiss from office his brother and heir-designate Qasim Mo'tamin who had been so nominated by his father Harun.

Mamun held a public gathering on Thursday 6th Ramadhan for taking the oath of allegiance to Imam Reza (A.S.) as heir-apparent. In order to appease his courtiers, soldiers and government officials, he ordered a year's salary to be paid to them as bonus, and had the coins (*dirham* and *dinar*) struck in Imam Reza's (A.S.) name. He also changed the state colour from the black dress of the Abbasids to the green of the Bani Hashem. Green flags were unfurled everywhere, and the name of Imam Reza (A.S.) as heir-apparent was mentioned in sermons throughout the Islamic realm.

10. Abbasid Reaction Towards Imam Reza's (A.S.) Nomination

The Abbasids in Baghdad, unaware of Mamun's real intentions, were taken aback at the turn of events and declared their opposition to Mamun for the following reasons:

1. The murder of Amin on Mamun's orders.
2. Dismissal of Mo'tamin the heir-apparent.
3. Nomination of Imam Reza (A.S.) as the new heir.
4. Fear of the Bani Hashem coming to power and the loss of power for the Bani Abbas.
5. Mamun's giving his daughter Umm Habib in marriage to Imam Reza (A.S.).
6. Mamun's own marriage with Puran, the daughter of Hassan bin Sahl, the brother of his *vazir* Fazl.

The Abbasids in Baghdad thus revolted against Mamun and installed his uncle Ibrahim bin Mahdi bin Mansur as their leader, and named Ishaq bin Musa al-Hadi as the latter's heir. Ibrahim, also called 'Ibne Shakla', was a debauch and an incompetent person, who died after only a short period in power. As we shall see in the following sections, Mamun, alarmed by the situation in Baghdad on one hand, and the growing popularity of Imam Reza (A.S.) on the other, decided to murder the Imam as well as his minister Fazl bin Sahl, because he thought the latter had blundered in advising the caliph to chose the descendant of the Prophet as his successor.

11. The Imam's Scholarly and Religious Debates

Mamun was a very clever, shrewd and knowledgeable politician. In order to get closer to Imam Reza (A.S.), he would arrange scholarly debates, and would usually invite

the Imam to participate in these meetings. There he would pose the most complicated religious and scientific questions to the scholars.

On Tuesdays, Mamun used to invite scholars of different religious persuasions to Merv. After meals he would perform ablution, perfume himself and enter the gathering. The debate hall would be furnished with the most expensive carpets, and the debate would continue until evening.

Imam Reza (A.S.), however, knew the objectives behind all this and would always warn his close followers not to be deceived by Mamun's actions. He would say: "By Allah! None other than he will kill me. There is no other option, we should be patient till this ends."

Mamun's real purpose in inviting the intelligentsia and top scholars from different lands to debate with Imam Reza (A.S.), was his vain desire to see one of the scholars overcome the heir of the Prophet. In this way he wanted to degrade the position attached to the person of the Imam among the scholars.

Learned scholars of the Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Hindus, star-worshippers and the atheists, as well as the different sects of Islam, would debate with Imam Reza (A.S.) and finally leave the gatherings in admiration for the God-given knowledge of the Prophet's rightful successor. The Imam used to answer them from their own books and on the basis of their own reasoning by presenting logical explanations in their own language.

After every debate, Imam Reza's (A.S.) popularity would soar, and respect and esteem for him would grow higher among the scholars, to the extent that people used to regard the Imam more worthy of the caliphate. The spies

of Mamun at these gatherings would keep him informed of the proceedings of the debates, making the caliph more jealous and more spiteful of the Imam.

But for the time being, Mamun maintained his outward behaviour of respect and on his request Imam Reza (A.S.) compiled two books: '*Fiqh ar-Reza*' and '*Tibb ar-Reza*', which respectively deal with the principles of Islamic jurisprudence and prescriptions of health and hygiene.

12. Incident of the '*Eid ul-Fitr*' Prayer

Contrary to Mamun's plans, Imam Reza's (A.S.) popularity grew among the people. The next Ramadhan in 202 AH (818 AD), the caliph thought of another plot and requested the Imam to lead the *Eid ul-Fitr* prayer. Imam Reza (A.S.) declined Mamun's request, pointing out that the prayer and sermon was not one of the conditions of the agreement between them.

Mamun, however, continued to insist on the pretext that he was desirous to see the Imam's confidence increase among people of all walks of life including government officials, courtiers and soldiers, who he said, were eager to see the power that Allah has granted to the Imam. He continued to press Imam Reza (A.S.) to deliver the sermon and lead the *Eid ul-Fitr* prayer.

A day before *Eid ul-Fitr*, the Imam seeing the futility of resistance said to Mamun: "*If you had excused me, I would have preferred it. However, since you have not excused me, I will go out as the Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, went out and as the*

Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him."⁶

Mamun agreed, and ordered soldiers, courtiers, government officials and ordinary people to be present in the morning at the Imam's (A.S.) residence in order to accompany him to the prayer-site. The next morning, people turned out in large numbers to see the Prophet's heir leave for the *Eid* prayer. So great was the enthusiasm, that many people waited on their roof-tops to catch a glimpse of the memorable procession.

Imam Reza (A.S.), after performing the ritual bath, put on a white garment and a white turban; and with a staff in hand, he emerged barefoot from his house. With his attendants similarly attired, he recited *Allahu Akbar* (God is Great) four times, and headed towards the site of the *Eid* prayer. The people loudly repeated *Allahu Akbar* after the Imam.

The government officials and soldiers, who were in official dress and on horseback, on seeing the Imam barefoot, dismounted and took off their shoes also and joined the grand spiritual procession. After every ten steps, the Imam would stop and recite *Allahu Akbar* four times. The people would follow suit, and so vociferous became the cry of Allah's majesty, that it unnerved the *vazir*.

Fazi bin Sahl, on seeing the grand procession and the total cooperation and coordination of the people with the Imam (A.S.), rushed back to Mamun and said: "If Imam Reza (A.S.) reaches the place of the *Eid* prayer in this way,

6. *Kitab al-Irshad*, Shaykh Mufid.

the people will break out in rebellion. We are all afraid for our lives. So send instructions for him to go back.”⁷

Mamun immediately sent a message to Imam Reza (A.S.), saying: “We have put an excessive burden on you and we have made you very tired. We do not want you to experience any hardship. Therefore, go back and let someone else pray with the people in the usual manner.”⁸

Imam Reza (A.S.), on receiving the message, called for his shoes, mounted and returned to his place of residence. This wise move by the Imam, further alienated the people from Mamun, and made them clamour for the heir of the Prophet. It is said that so great was the discontent of the people about the prayer that many, even after performing the *Eid* ritual, thought that it was not performed properly.

Mamun after this incident realized how greatly Imam Reza (A.S.), was loved by the people of Merv.

13. Imam Reza's (A.S.) Daily Practice

Imam Reza (A.S.) used to spend most of his time in prayers and fasting. His nights were spent in offering prayers and his days in leading a pious life. Every three days he used to complete the recitation of the whole Qur'an, and on every verse he used to go into deep meditation. In most of his lectures he used to give references from the Qur'an and its exegesis. He was without doubt, as even his adversaries acknowledged, the

7. *'Kitab al-Irshad'*, Shaykh Mufid.

8. *'Kitab al-Irshad'*, Shaykh Mufid.

most learned man of his age. He knew different languages and used to converse fluently with non-Arabs in their native tongues.

Imam Reza (A.S.) was very kind and benevolent, and without disclosing his identity, he would make nightly rounds to the houses of the poor, offering them food and money. He kept the company of the both the rich and the poor and used to eat among all classes. Ibrahim bin Abbas, who was one of the high ranking officials, has left the following eyewitness account of Imam Reza's (A.S.) impeccable character:

"I have never seen him speak injurious words, never seen him interrupt anybody while speaking, never seen him turn down a request for help if it was in his power to do it, never seen him stretch his feet or recline in the presence of others, never seen him speak anything foul or harsh to anyone of his slaves, never seen him spit, never seen him laugh aloud but that he would only smile, and whenever food used to be spread for him while alone, he would call his slaves and servants including the doorkeeper and the stableman to join him."⁹

Imam Reza's (A.S.) angelic attitude towards people was in fact a determined struggle against the rule of Mamun. He was afraid of nothing when preaching the truth to the people and for this reason his lectures were not liked by the caliph.

Once, two persons came to see Imam Reza (A.S.) and asked him for the ruling on the Prayer of the

9. 'Uyun Akhbar-ar-Reza', Shaykh Saduq ibn Babawaiy al-Qummi

Traveler.¹⁰ To the first he said that it was compulsory for him to offer the Traveler's Prayer because he had journeyed to see the Imam. To the second person he said that since he had committed a sin by travelling to court the favour of the oppressor Mamun, he should perform his prayers in full.

The above instances were some examples of Imam Reza's (A.S.) struggle against the oppressive rule of Mamun.

14. Imam Reza's (A.S.) Prayer for Rain

It happened that soon after the official nomination of Imam Reza (A.S.) as the caliph's successor, there was no rain for quite some time. The enemies seized this natural phenomenon as an opportunity to portray it as an ill omen resulting from Mamun's declaration. Mamun, on hearing the rumour became upset, and requested the Imam to pray to Almighty Allah to deliver the people from the drought. The Imam obliged, and on Monday morning with a large number of people, he headed towards the outskirts of the city to pray.

Praising Almighty God, the Imam started praying for rain. Soon some clouds appeared accompanied by thunder and lightning much to the joy of the people. But the Imam asked them to be patient saying that these clouds were not for them. The clouds passed and were followed by more

10. According to Islamic law, if a person travels more than 23 kms from his hometown, he is required to shorten his four-rakat prayers to two-rakats if his journey is a lawful one.

clouds, also accompanied with thunder and lightning. Imam Reza (A.S.) said that these clouds again were not for Merv but for such and such a place. More clouds followed, and on the eleventh occasion, the Imam said that this time it was for Merv and by the will of Almighty Allah, it would start raining by the time the people reach their houses.

After the people reached their homes, by the will of Allah and the blessed prayers of Imam Reza (A.S.), the downpour started and it rained so heavily that the fountains, ponds, and the deserts were filled with water.

15. Change in Mamun's Attitude Towards the Imam

Mamun, after nominating Imam Reza (A.S.) as his successor and celebrating the event, had pretended to show respect towards him, in order to deceive his opponents and to win their confidence. But due to such incidents as the 'Prayer for Rain' and the 'Eid Prayer', which increased the Imam's popular appeal, the crafty caliph became alarmed and his jealousy turned into barely concealed hatred.

Mamun changed his attitude and secretly put constraints on the Imam. He bribed Hesham bin Ibrahim al-Rashedi, who was one of the close companions of the Imam, to keep an eye on him. After this, without the caliph's permission, no one was allowed to meet the Imam. Hesham the traitor would pass all the news of the Imam's personal activities to Mamun and Fazl bin Sahl.

Some of the Abbasids who were not clever enough to see through Mamun's stratagem, thought that the caliph himself was destroying the Abbasid dynasty and

establishing the rule of the descendants of Imam Ali (A.S.) in their place. They started saying that Imam Reza (A.S.), after acquiring fame as Mamun's successor was out to uproot the Abbasid rule, and that the miracle of the rain was magic. They even accused Imam Reza (A.S.) of being a magician.

Mamun explained to them his strategy, saying:

"He (the Imam) used to invite people secretly, and we appointed him as our successor in order to use him and to gain his consent towards our rule, so that those who have become the adherents of his household should know that they (the Ahl-ul-Bait) have nothing special. The caliphate is for us. We were afraid that had we let him alone in Medina, then for sure he would have created such problems for us that we would have been unable to stop him. Now, this (the nomination) has happened, and not knowing what it truly meant we have put ourselves on the path of destruction. Since his status and power is very high, it is not wise to discard him suddenly. But we shall gradually eliminate him from his status so that the people will think of him as incompetent for successorship, and then we shall by all means discard him for good."

16. The Imam's Journey From Merv to Sanabad¹¹

In those days Arabia, the land of Revelation, was under oppression and tyranny, because it was far from the then capital, Merv, and people could not go there with ease to get redress for their problems.

After the capture of one of the villages of Kabul in the year 202 AH (817 AD) by the Abbasids, Imam Reza (A.S.) advised Mamun to leave Merv and shift the capital to Baghdad, the seat of government of his ancestors, so that the affairs of the Muslim State might be taken proper care of. He also told him not to relegate those affairs to others in view of his position, since the caliph would be ultimately responsible for any and all consequences.

Mamun, after learning that his uncle Ibrahim had assumed power in Baghdad, decided to go to war against him, and started towards Iraq. He agreed with Imam Reza's (A.S.) opinion, and ordered that arrangements be made to send an advance force towards Baghdad.

Despite Fazl bin Sahl's disagreement with the plan, Mamun ordered the move towards Iraq. His army along with Imam Reza (A.S.) entered Sarakhs, where he stayed for a while. Mamun had his own calculations, and in order to regain the favour of the Bani Abbas and to make up for his previous mistakes, he thought of a plan to kill both Fazl bin Sahl and the Imam. He had come to view his shrewd

11. The place where the shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) stands today was a garden called Sanabad, where the palace of the Abbasid governor Hamid bin Qahtaba was situated.

vazir Fazl bin Sahl who was in virtual control of the government, as a thorn in his side, and the personality and lofty status of Imam Reza (A.S.) on the other hand, had reduced him to not much more than an ordinary person in the sight of the people.

In Sarakhs, Fazl was warned by his brother Hassan bin Sahl, that based on the calculations of the astrologers for that month, he was in danger of tasting the heat of iron and fire on a particular day. On the dawn of Friday, however, Fazl bin Sahl went to the public bath in Sarakhs and was attacked by a group of people with swords and was killed.

With Fazl bin Sahl's assassination, Mamun felt relieved by the removal of a shrewd and powerful politician. He now decided to kill Imam Reza (A.S.). As a first step, he placed the Imam under restriction in Sarakhs. During his confinement, the Imam used to offer prayers and supplications to the Almighty. After seven months Mamun and his army along with Imam Reza (A.S.) headed towards Sanabad.

17. Martyrdom of Imam Reza (A.S.)

After reaching Sanabad with Imam Reza (A.S.), Mamun took up residence at the palace of Hamid bin Qahtaba.

On the morning of 30th Safar 203 AH (818 AD), Mamun's slave went to the Imam's residence with a message that the caliph wanted to see him. Imam Reza (A.S.) went to Mamun's palace. The caliph stood up and greeted the Imam, and after kissing his forehead, requested

him to sit beside him. Then he took a bunch of poisoned grapes and offered it to Imam Reza (A.S.), who politely declined to taste them. Mamun picked up a bunch of wholesome grapes and ate them, admiring their taste and quality. He again offered the poisoned ones to the Imam, persisting in his offer for him to have some. The Imam, having no choice, put the poisoned grapes to his mouth and immediately fell unconscious.

So fatal was the effect of the poisoned grapes, that on the same afternoon, the Eighth divinely-appointed Imam of mankind left for his heavenly abode, a martyr.¹² He breathed his last while resting in the lap of his young son Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad (A.S.), who although not present in Khorasan, had miraculously arrived from Medina for the last moments of his father's life.

Mamun, having accomplished his sinister plan, feigned sorrow, and in order to quell public suspicions, put on the mourning garb and joined in the funeral rites. Aware of the Imam's love and respect among the masses, he was afraid of a public uprising. He postponed the funeral for a day, and in the night had Imam Reza (A.S.) laid to rest at the spot which the Imam himself had marked on the southern side of Harun ar-Rashid's grave.¹³ At the time of

12. According to Shaykh Mufid's account, Imam Reza (A.S.) fell seriously ill after tasting the grapes and the crafty caliph to avoid suspicion feigned sickness himself. Mamun next ordered one of his servants, Abdullah bin Bashir, to squeeze pomegranate juice with poisoned finger-nails and serve it to the Imam. The drink proved fatal and Imam Reza (A.S.) who was recovering from the poisoned grapes, was martyred as a result. *Editor*.

13. Mamun actually wanted to bury the Imam at the feet of his accursed father, but couldn't, since on all three sides hard rock was

his martyrdom the Eighth Imam was 53 years, 3 months and 19 days old.

18. Mamun's Journey to Baghdad

After Imam Reza's (A.S.) martyrdom, Mamun wrote a letter to the people of Baghdad and the Abbasids, that since both Fazl bin Sahl and Imam Reza (A.S.), had been removed from the scene, there was no reason for their hostility against him. He, however, did not receive a favourable response, and becoming worried about the situation, decided to head towards Baghdad. From Sanabad he started for Gorgan where he stayed for a month to tighten security arrangements for Khorasan in his absence. From Gorgan he headed for the city of Rayy (presently a southern suburb of modern day Tehran), where he stayed a few days before marching for Nahrwan in Iraq.

At Nahrwan, Mamun was given a warm welcome by the Bani Abbas and the high ranking military officials of Baghdad. On 16th Safar, in 204 AH (819 AD), he entered Baghdad to overthrow Ibrahim bin Mahdi who had assumed the title of caliph for the past year and seven months.

Upon his entry into Baghdad, Mamun ordered the state colour to be changed back to the black of the Bani Abbas, from the green of the Bani Hashem which he had

found and the only place possible for burial was the spot marked by the Imam, above Harun's grave. *Editor.*

made after Imam Reza's (A.S.) nomination in order to mislead the masses.¹⁴

19. Imam Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad (A.S.)

Imam Reza (A.S.) left behind only one son, Imam Muhammad al-Taqi (A.S.), who was born on 10th Rajab in 195 AH (811 AD). His mother's name was Subaika who was of Nubian origin. His *kunya* was Abu Jafar, and two of his most famous epithets were *Taqi* and *Jawad*. At the time of his birth in Medina Muhammad Amin was the ruler in Baghdad.

Following Imam Reza's (A.S.) nomination as heir, Mamun had engaged his young daughter Umm al-Fazl to Imam Taqi (A.S.). The 9th Imam was in his 9th year at the time of his father's martyrdom, and with his God-gifted spiritual powers came from Medina to Khorasan for the last rites of Imam Reza (A.S.). The period of his Imamate was 18 years.

Imam Taqi's (A.S.) wife, Umm al-Fazl, was ultimately responsible for her husband's death at the young age of 25 years. After Mamun's death she instigated her uncle Mu'tasem (the new caliph) to poison Imam Taqi (A.S.). Thus was martyred the 9th Imam in Baghdad in the year 220 AH (835 AD), and was laid to rest beside his

14. Mamun after some victories against the Byzantines in Anatolia, died a miserable death at Tarsus on 18th Rajab in the year 218 AH (833 AD). *Editor*.

grandfather Imam Musa al-Kazem (A.S.) in the holy shrine in Baghdad which is known today as Kazemain.

PART II

**INTRODUCTION TO
THE BLESSED SITES AT
THE HOLY SHRINE**

PREFACE

The expansive mausoleum of Imam Reza (A.S.), known as *Astan-e Qods Razavi*, is Iran's largest, most holy and the most magnificent religious site. The structures at the shrine are the most beautiful specimen of Iran's Islamic architecture. They include mirror-work on the ceilings and vaults, tile-work with floral and geometrical designs on the walls, domes and minarets, and porcelain tiles embossed with different styles of Arabic calligraphy, especially the *Kufic* script. The main dome over the Imam's holy shrine as well as its entry *Ivans* and minarets are covered with gold.

The whole mausoleum evokes a spiritual aura, and its construction displays the art and styles of different ages. The following is a brief introduction of the holy premises, and its infrastructure and buildings, which over the last millennium have been enlarged and renovated.

1. Geographical and Historical Facts of Mashhad

In the early Islamic period, the area known as 'Tus' was a large tract of fertile land, which contained the two cities of

'Taberan' and 'Noughan' and a village by the name of 'Sanabad'. Taberan is the suburb called 'Tus' today while Noughan is the same place which most of modern Mashhad now occupies. In Sanabad, as we have mentioned in the first part, was a garden on which stood the palace of the Abbasid governor Hamid bin Qahtaba, where Harun al-Rashid was buried in 193 AH (809 AD), and which in those days was often referred to as '*Buqqa-e Haruniya*' or the 'Dome of Harun'.

Since Imam Reza (A.S.) was laid to rest in Sanabad under the same dome, the spot soon came to acquire an air of sanctity and became a site of pilgrimage for the followers of the Prophet's Ahl-ul-Bait. It subsequently became famous as '*Mashhad ar-Reza*' or 'Place of Martyrdom of Imam Reza (A.S.)' in view of the fact that the 8th rightful successor of the Prophet was martyred by Mamun and did not die a natural death as the caliph had claimed.

The name 'Mashhad' was for the first time mentioned by the 4th century AH geographer 'Maqdasi' (956-991 AD) in his book *Ahsan at-Taqaseem*. And in the first half of the 8th century AH, the name Mashhad began to appear on the coins of the Mongol Ilkhanid rulers instead of Noughan which they had hitherto used.

According to the historian Yaqubi, in the 3rd century AH, the city of Noughan was bigger than Taberan and was very attractive. A century later however, Taberan became more developed than Noughan, and was still so by the 7th century AH when the geographer Yaqut al-Hamawi recorded it in his book '*Muajjam al-Buldan*'.

In the 4th century AH, Noughan and Taberan ranked as the biggest cities after Nishabur in the district of the

same name. According to Maqdasi there was a large fort near Taberan which could be seen from a very long distance. The city had great bazaars and a very attractive and huge mosque. In the account of Ibn Hauqal, a strong fort-like structure enclosed the two famous graves in Sanabad where a group of people used to reside. According to Maqdasi, Amir Qayeq Ameer-ud-Dowla had built a big mosque around the tomb of Imam Reza (A.S.), which was one of the biggest and the most beautiful architectural works of Khorasan.

Harun's grave soon disappeared as gardens and bazaars grew around the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.). Mashhad acquired special importance because of the Imam's shrine, and because of the pilgrims visiting it from distant places.

In the second half of the 4th century AH, Sabuktigin Ghaznavi, the slave and successor of Alaptigin --who exercised authority over Khorasan as a vassal of the Samanid kings of Bukhara-- destroyed and demolished the dome and shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) and banned people from performing the pilgrimage. In the year 400 AH, however, Sabuktigin's son and successor, Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi (998-1020 AD), repaired the dome and the shrine and enclosed the city with a wall. After one of his victorious expeditions to India in the year 416 AH, Mahmud used beautiful marble tiles for the floors and high quality wood for the interior construction, which gave the shrine an attractive look. He also covered the tomb with a silver grill (*Zareeh*). Later his son Sultan Masoud, built a wall around the shrine and gave the mausoleum the appearance of a garden. In the year 515 AH (1117 AD), Sultan Sanjar of the Seljuq dynasty, because of the

miraculous healing of his son at the shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.), further enlarged the mausoleum.¹⁵

In 612 AH (1215 AD), as borne out by inscriptions on certain tiles, Alauddin Khwarezm-Shah carried out renovations on the shrine. Two of the prayer niches, embellished with elegant porcelain tiles, as well as those with *Kufic* inscriptions that adorn the walls to the upper side of the holy tomb (*Sar-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*), bear the name of his vazir Ali bin Muhammad Muqri. A couplet in Persian by Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Abdullah on the wall also carries the date 612 AH.

In the year 618 AH (1221 AD), the city of Tus and the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) suffered damage at the hands of the Mongol hordes of Tuli the son of Chengiz Khan, but it was rebuilt by the latter's Ilkhanid descendant, Sultan Muhammad Khodabanda 'Uljaito', who became a Muslim and a Shia, and ruled from 703 AH to 716 AH.

In 791 AH, while his father was away on his conquest of India, Miran Shah the son of Amir Timur (Tamerlane), started towards Tus and in one of his fits of madness razed Taberan to its foundations and massacred its inhabitants. Taberan lost its popularity, and as a result, Noughan and Sanabad rose to prominence, contributing to the gradual emergence of Mashhad as a major city.¹⁶

The systematic development of Mashhad began during the rule of Timur's younger son and successor,

15. In the post-Sanjar period, Princess Torkan Zamarrud Malik, the daughter of Mahmoud Seljuqi, had glazed tiles installed at the shrine, which bear her name and date 557 AH (1161 AD). *Editor*.

16. Timur on his return from India punished his son Miran Shah for the destruction of Tus by gouging out his eyes. *Editor*.

Shahrukh Mirza (806-850 AH/1404-1446 AD). Shahrukh's wife, Gowhar-Shad Agha built the famous Mosque facing the holy shrine in 821 AH (1418 AD).¹⁷

With the coming to power of the Safavid dynasty and their declaration of the Ja'fari school as the state religion, Mashhad reached the peak of its development and soon became one of the greatest sites of pilgrimage after Najaf, Karbala and Kazemain. However, since Khorasan was a border province of the Safavid Empire, Mashhad consequently suffered repeated invasions and periods of occupation by the Uzbek Khans --Muhammad Khan, Abdullah Khan Shaibani, Muhammad Sultan and especially Abdul-Momen Khan. These invasions continued up to 996 AH (1586 AD), the time of Shah Abbas I, who finally drove out the Uzbeks from Khorasan.

In the year 1084 AH (1635 AD), during the reign of the next Safavid ruler, Shah Sulaiman, a powerful earthquake shook Mashhad and a large crack appeared on the dome of the holy shrine. The crack was repaired two years later. The last foreign attack on the holy city was on 10th Rabi al-Thani in the year 1912 AD when Russian Czarist forces attacked the city with cannons and targeted the mausoleum. As a result, the dome and minarets suffered some damage and many pilgrims were martyred.

2. The Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.)

17. Gowhar-Shad carried out extensive works at the shrine and endowed lands for its maintenance. The Spanish ambassador to the court of Shahrukh in Samarqand, Gonzalez de Clavijo, who passed through Mashhad, has left a vivid account of the splendour of the shrine. *Editor*.

The holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) is located under a dazzling dome, around which are large *Rivaqs*. The mirror work under the dome is one of the finest in the world. The sacred tomb itself is inside a *Zareeh* (silver grill) which is one of the finest examples of Iranian Islamic art. The covered area of the square-shaped inner chamber of the holy shrine is 135 square meters. It was refurbished in 1955.

The southern area of the *Haram* (shrine) is called *Peesh-e Pa-e Mubarak* (at the blessed feet of the tomb) and the northern area of the *Haram* is called *Pusht-e Sar-e Mubarak* (the upper side of the blessed tomb).

Marble covers the inside walls of the *Haram* (shrine) to a height of 20 centimeters. Above this, to a height of up to 92 centimeters the walls are decorated with the famous tiles known as *Sultan Sanjari*.

On the tiles, Qur'anic verses and the sacred traditions of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) and his progeny, have been written in the famous Persian style of calligraphy called *Aslemi*.¹⁸ These beautiful inscriptions gird the inside of the dome and the side walls around the shrine. The width of the inscriptions is 80 centimeters comprising verses of the chapter *Juma* (Friday) of the Holy Qur'an, written in *Sols* style by the famous Safavid era calligraphist Ali Reza Abbasi. Verses of the Qur'anic chapter *Insan* are also written on the same tiles.

18. '*Aslemi*' is a style of calligraphy in a cursive and highly intricate form.

3. The 'Zareeh' Over the Blessed Tomb

The sacred grave of Imam Reza (A.S.) is covered by a *Sandouq*, around which is the *Zareeh* or silver-grill. The exact date of the first *Zareeh* at Mashhad is not known. According to historians the first *Zareeh* was probably built around 500 AH. In 1160 AH, one of the grandsons of Nader Shah Afshar, called Shahrugh, presented a new *Zareeh* to the holy shrine on behalf Shah Tahmasb III.

The present *Zareeh* was installed at the shrine in 1959 AD on the eve of the auspicious 15th of Sha'ban. It is made of silver with gold plating and took over two years to build. On the two sides that have doors, the names of the 'Fourteen Infallibles' (*Ma'sumeen*) are inscribed in *Sols* on gold plates studded with turquoise. Verses of the holy Qur'an, the Attributes of Almighty Allah, and the traditions of the Prophet and his progeny, are also engraved in different styles of calligraphy.

Of the 100 Divine Names engraved, 44 are written on one side, from which could be derived the number '1379' indicating the Islamic lunar year (1379 AH) in which the *Zareeh* was installed. The *Zareeh* is 405 centimeters in length, 306 centimeters in width, and 360 centimeters in height. On the ceiling, splendid mirror-work which was installed in 1817 AD during the reign of Fath Ali Shah Qajar has been preserved.¹⁹

19. According to a report published in the Persian daily *Hamshahri* on Sunday, 26th November 1995, a new *Zareeh* is being built under the supervision of master craftsman Ustad Farshichiyan. The size of the new *Zareeh* is bigger than the present one. As per the evaluation of experts the new *Zareeh* is designed to last 300 years without

4. The 'Sandouq' Over the Blessed Grave

After Imam Reza (A.S.) was laid to rest, a wooden *Sandouq* (case) was placed over his blessed grave. In the 6th century AH, during the rule of Sultan Sanjar, a *Sandouq* made of silver replaced the old one. The famous North African traveler, Ibn Batuta, who passed through Mashhad in 734 AH (1333 AD), has written in his travel-account about a wooden case plated with silver and covering the blessed grave. With the coming to power of the Safavids, the second king of the dynasty, Shah Tahmasb I, coated the *Sandouq* with gold, and during the reign of Shah Abbas I it received another coating and inscriptions by the calligraphist Ali Reza Abbasi.

In 1153 AH Nader Shah applied another coat of gold which, however was later removed by his grandsons, Nader Mirza and Nusratullah Mirza, who melted it to make the 'Naderi Coins'.

In 1932 AD the wooden *Sandouq* was removed and transferred to the museum, and in its place a new *Sandouq*, made of 11 slabs of exquisite marble, was installed over the grave. The marble, which is from the Shandiz quarry near Mashhad, is green in colour with a yellowish hue. This *Sandouq* is 210 centimeters in length, 160 centimeters in width, and 95 centimeters in height. The same marble was also used for the floor inside the *Sandouq*.

repairs or renovation, in view of the growing number of pilgrims every day to the shrine of the Eighth Imam. *Translator.*

5. The Dome Over the Blessed Shrine

The first dome, as mentioned in Part I, was built by Mamun. The present dome, however, was built over the shrine during the rule of Sultan Muhammad Khodabanda Uljaito (703-716 AH) with high quality decorative glazed tiles being used for its construction.

The great dome, is one of the biggest and the most magnificent specimens of Islamic architecture in Iran. The height of the dome from the floor is 31.20 meters, with inscriptions by Ali Reza Abbasi, girding its interior.

In the year 932 AH (1525 AD), Shah Tahmasb removed the glazed tiles from the dome and replaced them with gold bricks. During the Uzbek occupation of Mashhad, Abdul-Momen Khan attacked the holy shrine and stole all the gold from the dome, however in the period 1010-1016 AH (1601-1617 D), Shah Abbas I, once again covered the dome with gold bricks.

6. The Minarets at the Holy Shrine

Minarets give the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) an attractive appearance. In Persian architecture, the dome is usually flanked by a pair of minarets rising from its two sides, but at the shrine, the two minarets are not constructed on either side of the dome. They are built in a unique style, with one minaret rising not far from the dome beside the Ivan-e Naderi in the southern part of the Inqelab Courtyard, and the other at a good distance, beside the Ivan-e Abbasi in the northern part of the same courtyard.

This distance can be perceived only from inside the shrine itself. It was so constructed because in the past, since most pilgrims would enter Mashhad from Imam Reza Street, on their first look towards the holy shrine they would be able to see the dome appearing in the middle of the two minarets.

The minaret beside the Ivan-e Naderi, was constructed by Shah Tahmasb I, after the plunder of the holy shrine by Abdul-Momen Khan. Later in 1142 AH (1730 AD), during Nader Shah's rule, rectangular gold bricks were once again applied to this minaret. The height of this minaret is 40.5 meters and its diameter is 13 meters.

The other minaret, located beside the Ivan-e Abbasi was built by Nader Shah in 1146 AH. Its height is 35 meters and covered with diamond-shaped gold bricks.

7. '*Rivaqs*' and Prayer Halls

The holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) is covered on all its sides by a series of *Rivaqs* and Prayer Halls, constructed in different historical periods with different designs. They are as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Dar ul-Huffaz | 10. Dar us-Saalam |
| 2. Dar us-Siyadah | 11. Dar ush-Sharaf |
| 3. Masjid-e Bala-e Sar | 12. Dar ush-Shukr |
| 4. Dar ul-Ikhlas | 13. Dar uz-Ziyafah |
| 5. Dar ul-Faiz | 14. Tawhid Khaneh |
| 6. Dar uz-Zikr | 15. Gombad-e Allahverdi Khan |
| 7. Dar us-Sa'adah | 16. Gombad-e Hatem Khani |
| 8. Dar us-Sarour | 17. Taalaar-e Tashrifaat |
| 9. Dar ul-Izzah | |

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 18. Dar uz-Zuhd | 21. Dar ul-Wilayah |
| 19. Maqbara-e-Shaykh Bahai | 22. Dar ul-Qurra |
| 20. Dar ul-Ibadah | 23. Dar ur-Rahmah. |

1. Dar ul-Huffaz: This *Rivaq* faces the blessed tomb (*Peesh-e Rou-e Mubarak*) with Dar us-Salam on its east, the *Shabestans* (chambers for night prayers) of the Gowhar-Shad Mosque on its north, and the passage towards Dar us-Siyadah on its west.

Usually, pilgrims entering the holy shrine through this *Rivaq*, recite the verse of the holy Qur'an on seeking permission to enter the Prophet's houses. The pilgrims thus take permission from Allah, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) and the infallible Imams for entering the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.). This great *Rivaq* was built by Gowhar-Shad Agha, wife of Shahrukh Mirza, the son and successor of Amir Timur. Stone slabs engraved with verses of the holy Qur'an and floral designs, cover the base of its walls to a height of 1.70 meters from the plinth or base. The length of the *Rivaq* is 18 meters, its width is 8.65 meters and its height is 24.46 meters.

The tile-work of Gowhar-Shad's era was replaced with mirror-work in 1269 AH (1854 AD) during the Qajar era. Dar ul-Huffaz (Hall of Memorizers of the holy Qur'an) was specially constructed for reciting the holy Book, and to this day, every evening and morning the *Khudams* (Staff - both regular and honorary) of the holy shrine, gather here for the traditional ceremony. Abbas Mirza the heir-apparent of Fath Ali Shah, was buried in this *Rivaq* after he died fighting against the Russians in the Caucasus.

2. Dar us-Siyadah: This *Rivaq* is located to the upper side (*Bala-e Sar-e Mubarak*) of the blessed tomb of Imam Reza (A.S.), with the Ivan of Gowhar-Shad Mosque to its north. On its east is Dar ul-Huffaz and the Masjid-e Bala-e Sar-e Mubarak, on its south is Dar ush-Sharaf, and on its west are Dar ul-Ikhlās and the Theological School known as Madrasa-e Bala-e Sar-e Mubarak-e Hazrat.

The length of the *Rivaq* is 32.86 meters, its width is 7.76 meters and its height up to the ceiling is 20.87 meters.

This *Rivaq* was also built by Gowhar-Shad simultaneous with the great mosque at the holy mausoleum which bears her name. On the orders of Gowhar-Shad the walls of this *Rivaq* were built of white marble two feet above the ground. Glazed bricks in even form have been used on the walls with verses from the holy Qur'an written on the top sections in '*Nastaliq*' style. Above the Qur'anic inscriptions is stucco work inlaid with mirrors. Dar us-Siyadah presents one of the most attractive displays of Islamic art with vault-work, stucco designs, mirror-work, wood-carvings, masonry and engravings contributing to its splendour.

In the north-east, the *Rivaq* is separated from the holy *Zareeh* by a silver grill. Many great and prominent '*ulema* are buried in this *Rivaq*.

3. Masjid-e Bala-e Sar-e Mubarak-e Hazrat: On its west the shrine is connected to a small mosque. To the north of the mosque is Dar ush-Shukr, and on its west is Dar us-Siyadah. Since pilgrims enter the shrine through this mosque it has become famous as Masjid-e Bala-e Sar-e Mubarak-e Hazrat. It is one of the oldest existing mosques

in Mashhad, and was built by Abu'l-Hasan Dabir in the time of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi --over a thousand years ago. It is covered with marble and *Sultan Sanjari* glazed tiles. Its length is 7 meters and its width is 5 meters. Silver windows separate the mosque from Dar us-Siyadah. Ibn Batuta who visited Mashhad in 734 AH (1333 AD) has mentioned this mosque in his travel account. Due to its special significance and its location near the tomb, most pilgrims use this mosque for prayers and supplications.

4. Dar ul-Ikhlās: To the upper side of the tomb (*Bala-e Sar-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*) and to the north of Dar us-Siyadah, there is a small area only 3 meters wide which is connected to the corridor leading to the *Saqqa-Khaneh* (drinking-water fountain). The corridor is 6.58 meters long.

In the past pilgrims used to drink water from a *Sang-ab* or a huge stone bowl which used to be in the corridor. Presently, the bowl which is a marvellous piece of pre-Mongol Islamic art, is being kept at the shrine museum. The corridor was built in the time of Sultan Muhammad bin Masoud, one of the leading figures of the Sarbedar movement of Sabzevar (mid 14th century AD).

During 1963-65 AD, for the convenience of pilgrims, the Saqqa-Khaneh Corridor, which was in the south-west corner of the Ivan-e Talaie (The Golden Ivan) of the Inqelab Courtyard, was merged with the room known as '*Mahl-e Raees-e Farrash-ha* (Office of the Superintendent of Furnishings) and was converted into a new *Rivaq* called 'Dar ul-Ikhlās'.

The length of the *Rivaq* is 12.80 meters, its width is 10 meters and its height is 9.50 meters. Lemon-coloured

tiles cover its floor and part of the walls from the plinth, with verses of the chapter '*Muzammil*' of the holy Qur'an inscribed on tiles in *Sols* style. The inscriptions reach almost to the ceiling which is covered in mirror-work, making Dar ul-Ikhlās quite attractive.

5. Dar ul-Faiz: This *Rivaq* is located behind the area known as *Bala-e Sar-e Mubarak*. On its north is the Tawhid Khaneh, on its east the Allahverdi Khan Dome, on its west Dar ash-Shukr and on its south is the blessed shrine. This premises was originally known as *Masjid Zananeh Riyaz* (Riyaz Women's Mosque). As most of the mirror-work was in a state of decay, repairs were carried out in 1968 AD and subsequently the *Rivaq* became known as Dar ul-Faiz. The Riyaz mosque and the corridor of Shah Tahmasb are each 7 meters long.

The length of Dar ul-Faiz is 15.85 meters, its width is 5.90 meters and its height 9.5 meters. Its floor is covered with a type of marble, smoky in appearance, while marble slabs rise from its plinth to a height of 1.67 meters on its walls. The upper section of the walls are rich in vault work, with beautiful glazed tiles bearing inscriptions from the holy Qur'an and 98 of the *Asma al-Husna* (Divine Attributes). This *Rivaq* is reserved exclusively for women pilgrims.

6. Dar uz-Zikr: This *Rivaq* is located at the blessed feet of the tomb (*Paean-e Pa-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*). On its north is Dar us-Sarour, on its east is the Azadi Courtyard, on its south is Dar uz-Zuhd and the Taalaar-e Tashrifat (VIP Hall) and on its west is Dar ul-Izzah.

In the western part of the Azadi courtyard to the southeast of the shrine's door, there used to be the Theological School of Ali Naqi Mirza which had an open space called *Khuddam's* rest-house. However, during the years 1963-65 AD the school and the rest-house were converted into a big and magnificent *Rivaq* called Dar uz-Zikr. In the year 1967 AD, the interior decoration of the *Rivaq* was completed.

Dar uz-Zikr is 15.72 meters long, 12.19 meters wide, and its height 9 meters. Green marbles cover the floor with white marble rising to a height of 1.5 meters on the walls from its plinth. The walls leading to the ceiling are rich in tile-work, and vault-work, mirror-work and stucco beautify the ceiling.

7. Dar us-Sa'adah: This *Rivaq* is also located at the feet of the blessed tomb (*Paeen-e Pa-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*). On its east is the Ivan-e Talaie Naderi (Golden Ivan of Nader), on its south is Dar us-Sarour, on its west is the Hatem Khani Dome, and on its north is Dar uz-Ziyafah and the Allahverdi Khan Dome. The length of the *Rivaq* is 12 meters, and its width 10 meters. It has two sections, the first connects it to the shrine and the Hatem Khani Dome, the second section was built by Allahyar Khan the governor of Khorasan in 1251 AH (1836 AD). Dar us-Sa'adah is reserved exclusively for women pilgrims.

8. Dar us-Sarour: This *Rivaq* is located at the blessed feet of the tomb (*Paeen-e Pa-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*). On its north is Dar us-Sa'adah, on its east is the Azadi Courtyard, on its south is Dar uz-Zikr and on its west is Dar us-Salaam.

Previously this *Rivaq* had some sections which were used as a tea-room and later as the Shrine's Administrative Office. During 1955-59 AD, the area was expanded and after necessary changes, turned into a spacious *Rivaq* called Dar us-Sarour. Marble is used on the floor, with marble slabs on the walls to a height of 1.46 meters from the plinth. Mirror-work covers the remaining parts of the walls and the ceiling. Dar as-Sarour is 24.10 meters long and 4.82 meters wide while its height is 4.75 meters.

9 Dar ul-Izzah: This *Rivaq* is also located at the blessed feet of the tomb (*Paen-e Pa-e Mubarak-e-Hazrat*). On its north is Dar us-Sarour, on its east is Dar uz-Zikr, on its south are the *Shabestans* of the Gowhar-Shad Mosque and on its west is Dar us-Salaam.

Dar ul-Izzah was built during 1963-65 AD, when the *Khuddam* Rest-house in the western part of the Ali Naqi Mirza Theological School was annexed to the shrine. In 1967 AD, as a result of renovation and expansion of other *Rivaqs*, it was linked via three narrow passages to Dar us-Salam and by a corridor to the *Shabestans* of Gowhar-Shad Mosque.

Dar ul-Izzah is 11.60 meters long, 3.12 meters wide and its height 4.35 meters. Marble covers the floor, with marble slabs on the walls from the base to a height of 1.48 meters. Mirror-work adorns the remaining parts of the walls and the ceiling.

10. Dar us-Salaam: This *Rivaq* is located at the blessed feet of the tomb (*Paen-e Pa-e Mubarak-e-Hazrat*). On its north is the Hatem Khani Dome, on its east are Dar us-

Sarour and Dar ul-Izzah, on its south are the *Shabestans* of Gowhar-Shad Mosque and on its west is Dar ul-Huffaz.

The place originally used to be a two-storey building called Tahveel Khaneh, with the ground floor serving as a store-room for carpets and the first floor as a resting place. During 1955-59 AD, for the convenience of the pilgrims, it was converted into a large *Rivaq* and named Dar us-Salaam.

In 1967 AD, the *Rivaq* underwent complete renovation along with the Opuk Mirza Dome (corridor of the former *Khuddam* rest-house), and given its present magnificent appearance. The length of this *Rivaq* is 20 meters, its width is 10 meters and its height is 9.5 meters. It has mirror-work on the walls and ceilings, with marble covering its floor and the base area of the walls.

11. Dar ush-Sharaf: This *Rivaq* is located to the upper side of the tomb (*Bala-e Sar-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*). On its north are Dar us-Siyadah and Dar ul-Ikhlās, on its east is Dar ush-Shukr, on its north is Ivan-e Talaie Naderi, and on its west is Dar ul-Wilayah. Dar ush-Sharaf was built in 1964 AD, and its total area is 140 square meters.

12. Dar ush-Shukr: This is also located to the upper side of the blessed tomb (*Bala-e Sar-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*). On its north are the Ivan Talaie Naderi and the Tawhid Khaneh, on its east is Dar ul-Faiz, on its south is the Masjid-e Bala Sar and on its west is Dar ush-Sharaf.

The section leading to the Masjid-e Bala Sar was originally very small and inconvenient for pilgrims. Therefore, during 1963-64 AD, along with the *Qira'at Khaneh* of the Ivan-e Talaie in the southeast corner of the

Inqelab or Ateeq Courtyard, it was joined to some corridors of the Masjid-e Bala Sar and the Tawhid Khaneh, and turned into a big *Rivaq* named Dar ush-Shukr. Marble from the Mahallat quarries of western Iran was used on its floor with white marble slabs used on the walls from the plinth to a height of 1.70 meters. The length and breadth of this square-shaped *Rivaq* are 6.50 meters each, while its height is 9.50 meters. Dar ush-Shukr is rich in mirror-work, vault-work, and other embellishments of Islamic art.

13. Dar uz-Ziyafah: This *Rivaq* is located at the feet of the blessed tomb (*Paen-e Pa-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*). On its south is Dar us- Sa'adah, on its east the Azadi Courtyard, on its north the Inqelab Courtyard and on its west is the Allahverdi Khan Dome.

This *Rivaq* was previously used as an official lounge for dignitaries visiting the holy shrine. It was renovated in 1941 AD, and during the years 1958-68 AD, was given a complete transformation with new mirror-work and tiles. For the convenience of pilgrims, a shoe-keeping place was set up between Dar-uz-Ziyafah and the Allahverdi Khan Dome, and its southern area connected to Dar-us-Sa'adah. The length of this *Rivaq* is 18 meters and its width is 15 meters.

14. Tawhid Khaneh: This is located behind the tomb (*Pusht-e Sar-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*). On its south is Dar ul-Faiz, while on its east is the Allahverdi Khan Dome. The length of this *Rivaq* is 16.5 meters and its width is 7.5 meters. The Tawheed Khaneh *Rivaq* was built by the famous scholar Mulla Mohsen Faiz Kashani in the time of

Shah Sulaiman Safavi, (1077-1105 AH/1666-1693 AD). It is reserved exclusively for women pilgrims.

15. Allahverdi Khan Dome: This dome lies towards the feet of the tomb (*Paen-e Pa-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*). On its north is the Inqelab Courtyard, on its east is Dar uz-Ziyafah, on its south is the Hatem Khani Dome and Dar us-Sa'adah, and on its west are Dar ul-Faiz and the Tawhid Khaneh. Allahverdi Khan, who was one of the top statesmen of the era of Shah Abbas I, is buried under this dome.

This octagonal dome is one of the marvels of Safavid architecture. The height of the dome from the floor is 16.20 meters. The walls are marble to a height of 1.90 meters from its base, and beautiful glazed tiles cover the remaining part of the walls. Eight corridors lead to the dome while the upper section of the octagonal dome has eight arcades. This *Rivaq* is exclusively reserved for women pilgrims.

16. Hatem Khani Dome: This dome also lies towards the feet of the blessed tomb (*Paen-e Pa-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*). On its north is Dar us-Salaam, on its east is Dar us-Sa'adah, on its south is the Allahverdi Khan Dome, and on its west is the tomb.

Hatem Khan Ordubadi Tabrizi was a minister of Shah Abbas I, and he built this dome as a burial place for himself in the year 1010 AH (1607 AD). He died in 1019 AH and was laid to rest under this dome at the feet of Imam Reza (A.S.). The length of this *Rivaq* is 13 meters and its width is 5 meters. It is exclusively reserved for women pilgrims.

17. *Taalaar-e-Tashrifat*: This (VIP) lounge opens to the Imam Khomeini Courtyard on its north. On its east is *Dar uz-Zuhd*, on its south *Dar uz-Zikr*, and on its west are the *Shabestans* of the Gowhar-Shad Mosque.

After the start of construction work in 1961 AD, it was completed as a three storey structure in 1976 AD. It was once open land where a tiles factory and a kitchen stood. The basement is now used as a storage room, while the first and second floor are used for official ceremonies. Each floor has an area of 600 square meters, with marble on the floors and base areas of the walls and elegant stucco frames on the walls and ceiling. Huge chandeliers and crystal wall-lamps add to the attractiveness of the halls.

18. *Dar uz-Zuhd*: This *Rivaq* is connected on its north to *Dar uz-Zikr*, on its west to *Taalaar-e Tashrifat*, on its east to the tomb of the famous Safavid scholar and theologian, Shaykh Bahauddin Ameli, and on its south to the Imam Khomeini Courtyard

It was completed in 1974 AD as a double-storey structure after construction started on a vacant plot of land adjacent to the *Taalaar-e Tashrifat* in 1969. The *Dar uz-Zuhd Rivaq* contains some of the most attractive Islamic art-work in the form of vaults, mirror-work and stucco. Marble covers the floor and the base area of the walls, while glazed tiles adorn its facade.

19. *Shaykh Bahai Rivaq*: This *Rivaq* which contains the tomb of Shaykh Bahai,²⁰ opens unto the Imam Khomeini

20. Shaykh Muhammad Bahauddin al-Ameli was born in 953 AH (1544 AD) in Ba'labek in what is now known as Lebanon, and at the

Courtyard to its south, and unto the Azadi Courtyard to its north. To its east is Dar ul-Ibadah and to its west is Dar uz-Zuhd. Attractive mirror-work adorns the walls and ceiling of the *Rivaq*.

20. Dar ul-Ibadah: This *Rivaq* opens on its south and east unto the Imam Khomeini Courtyard, on its north is the Azadi Courtyard, and on its west it leads to the Shaykh Bahai Rivaq. Attractive mirror-work, and plaster work in the form of vaults and stucco adorn its walls and ceilings. Dar ul-Ibadah is exclusively reserved for women pilgrims.

21. Dar ul-Wilayah: This *Rivaq* is located to the upper side of the tomb (*Bala-e Sar-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*). On its north are the Shaykh Tusi sanctuary and the Inqelab Courtyard, on its east are Dar ush-Sharaf and Dar ul-Ikhlās, on its south are the theological schools known as Madrasa-e Bala-e Sar and Madrasa-e Do Darb, and on its west is the Islamic Republic Courtyard. It covers an area of 2,305 square meters, and was completed in 1988 AD. Tiles and mirror-work adorn its walls and ceiling.

age of seven, he migrated to Iran along with his father. He mastered the sciences of the day, and rose into prominence during the reign of Shah Abbas 1, who appointed him as Shaykh ul-Islam --the highest religious post of the day. Shaykh Bahai has left behind many valuable works, which continue to be taught at theological centers and universities. He died in Isfahan in 1031 AH, and his body was brought to Mashhad and laid to rest in this Rivaq. His works include *Jame' Abbasi* (fiqh), *Miftah al-Falah* (supplications), *Kitab al-Arba'een* (hadith), *Kashkoul* (literature), *Khulasat al Hisab* (mathematics), *Kitab al-Jabr wa'l-Muqabala* (algebra), *Tashreeh al-Aflak* (astronomy), and a discourse on astrolabe and geometry.

Editor.

22. Dar ul-Qurra: This *Rivaq*, located to the upper side of the tomb (*Bala-e Sar-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*), was built recently in the eastern corner of the Islamic Republic Courtyard. On its east is the Shaykh Bahai Rivaq and on its north is Madrasa-e Do Darb. Mirror-work, tiles and other forms of interior decoration adorn this *Rivaq*.

23. Dar ur-Rahmah: This newly built *Rivaq* was opened to pilgrims in 1992. It covers an area of 365 square meters and opens unto the Islamic Republic Courtyard. It is rich in mirror-work, stucco, and other forms of Islamic art.

8. Courtyards and Ivans.

All around the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) spacious courtyards (*sahn*) were built at different periods of history. The courtyards all lead to the holy shrine via the *Rivaqs* mentioned in the preceding section.

Religious ceremonies, such as Friday Prayers, congregational supplications, important speeches, and mourning rites are held in the courtyards. On the traditional mourning days, large groups of mourners come through various courtyards to the holy shrine. The courtyards are as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Inqelab Courtyard | 4. Imam Khomeini Courtyard |
| 2. Azadi Courtyard | 5. Qods Courtyard |
| 3. Gowhar-Shad Mosque
Courtyard | 6. Islamic Republic Courtyard |
| | 7. Razavi Courtyard |

1. Inqelab Courtyard :

The Inqelab Courtyard, formerly known as '*Sahn-e-Ateeq*' or 'Old Courtyard', has one of the finest displays of Islamic art at the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.). It is located to the north of the blessed tomb (*Bala-e Sar-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*) between the two sanctuaries for worshippers known as *Bast-e Shaykh Tusi* and *Bast-e Shaykh Hur Ameli*. Before the reign of Shah Abbas I, the area of the courtyard was half of its present size.

It was built by Amir Ali Sher Nawaie, the famous literary figure who served as minister to the last Timurid king, Sultan Hussain Bayqara (875-912 AH/1470-1506 AD), who subsequently channelled the waters of the 'Gilas' or 'Golasb' spring to Mashhad. The canal after passing through a street on the northern side of the shrine was directed towards a fountain in the middle of this courtyard, and upon filling it, flowed out towards the other side of the shrine in a southerly direction.

In the time of Shah Abbas I, the courtyard was expanded along with the *Ivans* built by Ali Sher Nawaie. Two more *Ivans* were added on the eastern and western sides by Shah Abbas, who in addition to other works, laid out two streets called 'Upper' and 'Lower', connecting the shrine to the eastern and western gates of the city. In the time of Shah Abbas II in 1059 AH (1648 AD) more tile-work with inscriptions, was added to the courtyard.

Between the years 1947-51 AD, the canal built by Ali Sher Nawaie was covered with concrete slabs because of the pollution on the streets.

The courtyard is rectangular in shape, with its length from east-to-west measuring 104.5 meters, and its width

from north-to-south measuring 64 meters. Marble slabs in square, hexagonal and octagonal shapes have been used on the floor. The Inqelab Courtyard, as it is known today, has a total of 60 Chambers. Besides the golden *Ivan* which leads to the shrine itself, there is a large steel grill, through which pilgrims can have a glimpse of the blessed tomb.

The Inqelab Courtyard has four big *Ivans* which are the among the most excellent works of architecture at the holy shrine.

A. The Southern Ivan: The Southern Ivan is famous as the *Ivan-e Talaie Naderi* (Nader's Golden Ivan). It is the oldest in the courtyard and was built by Ali Sher Nawaie. Its length is 10 meters, width 8 meters and its height is 26.25 meters.

It was repaired during the rule of Shah Tahmasb (930-986 AH/1523-1576 AD). In 1146 AH (1733 AD), Nader Shah renovated the *Ivan* and covered it with gold-coated silver bricks. White marble from the Maragheh quarries in western Iran, covers the floor.

B. The Northern Ivan: This is famous as the *Ivan-e Abbasi* and was built on the orders of Shah Abbas I. In 1059 AH (1648 AD) Shah Abbas II completed the decorating of the *Ivan*. The grave of Ali Sher Nawaie is located in the corner of this *Ivan*.

The length of the *Ivan-e Abbasi* is 14.8 meters, its width 8.20 meters and its height is 22.5 meters. From the base up to the roof, beautiful tiles and vault-work adorn the *Ivan*, which has four chambers at the top. The *Rivaq* built by Shah Abbas II at the *Ivan* is covered with exquisite glazed tiles, beautifully inscribed in *Sols* style by the

calligrapher Muhammad Reza Imami. In 1967 AD, extensive renovation was carried out at the *Ivan*.

C. The Eastern Ivan: This is also known as the *Neqqar Khaneh*, because the section housing the kettle-drums (*Neqqarah*) is located on its top. It is one of the most beautiful *Ivans* of the holy shrine, with its length measuring 18.2 meters, width 7.8 meters and height 26 meters. It was built by Shah Abbas I and was repaired in 1276 AH (1861 AD) during the reign of Naseruddin Shah Qajar. In 1958 AD, marble replaced the black stones of the *Ivan*, and during the extensive renovations carried on the *Ivan* in 1964-66 AD, the old worn-out tiles were removed and new tiles installed, and a vaulted chamber was built on top for the kettle-drums.

The *Ivan* has a large crescent-shaped slab of marble on the upper part of its main door. It was installed by Shah Safi In 1044 AH (1634 AD) and has traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) in *Sols* style and Persian poetry in *Nastaliq* style, engraved upon it. The glazed tiles on the *Ivan* are of triangular, pentagonal and hexagonal shapes.

D. The Western Ivan: This is known as the *Ivan-e Sa'at* or the 'Clock Tower Ivan' because of the big clock which was installed at its top by Shah Abbas. The tile-work in *Sols* style was done by the famous calligrapher Ali Reza Abbasi with lapis lazuli (*Laje Verdi*) being the dominant colour. Most of the original tiles have been replaced by new ones over the years. The ceiling has preserved the attractive vault-work of the Safavid period.

The Tomb of Hur al-Ameli: In the northeastern part of the Inqelab Courtyard is the tomb of the prominent scholar Shaykh Muhammad Hur al-Ameli, who was born in 1033 AH (1623 AD) in one of the villages of Jabal Amel in Lebanon. He settled in Iran, living over 25 years of his life in holy Mashhad, where he breathed his last in 1104 AH at the age of 71. He has left behind valuable works including the famous book *Wasael ash-Shia ila Tahseel Masael ash-Sharia*. His tomb was renovated in 1984 AD.

2. Azadi Courtyard:

Known formerly as *Sahn-e Nou* or 'New Courtyard', Azadi Courtyard is located to the east at the foot of the blessed tomb (*Paen-e Pa-e Mubarak-e Hazrat*). It was built in 1223 AH in the time of Fath Ali Shah Qajar, who ruled Iran from 1797 to 1834 AD. Its length is 85 meters and its width 54 meters. It was modelled on the Safavid architectural style of the *Sahn-e Ateeq* or Inqelab Courtyard.

In 1969 AD, renovations were carried out on the walls of *Sahn-e Nou* and marble was installed. The *Saqqa-Khaneh*, similar to the one at the *Ateeq* or Inqelab Courtyard, was removed from the centre of this courtyard and a big fountain put in its place with flowers and shrubs planted around it. At present the flower shrubs have been replaced with drinking water facilities.

The Azadi Courtyard is surrounded by double-storey chambers, of which the ground floors serve as family burial vaults and the top floor as offices of the Shrine's Administrative Department. The basement of the courtyard is known as *Behesht-e Samen al-Aimma* (Paradise of the 8th Imam) and is used as a public cemetery. Mourning

ceremonies, lectures, sermons, and funeral services, are held in this courtyard.

The Azadi Courtyard has the following four *Ivans* :

A) The Western Ivan: Also known as the *Ivan-e-Talaie Naseri* (Naseruddin Shah's Golden Ivan), it leads into the holy shrine via Dar us-Sa'adah. In 1278 AH (1861 AD) this *Ivan* was covered with gold on the orders of Naseruddin Shah. Its length is 15.30 meters, width is 7.25 meters and height is 20.10 meters. The floor is covered with marble and the marble railing on its outskirts gives it a beautiful appearance. On the base area of its walls coloured marble has been used in beautiful designs.

B) The Southern Ivan: The length of this *Ivan* is 18.30 meters, its width is 7.30 meters and its height is 20 meters. On its rear side was a kitchen for the shrine staff, which was demolished in 1969, thus connecting the *Ivan* to the courtyard now known as *Sahn-e Imam Khomeini*. Previously the *Ivan* had ordinary tiles, which were replaced by vaults and glazed tiles bearing inscriptions after renovation.

C) The Northern Ivan: This *Ivan* was built in 1295 AH (1880 AD) in the time of Naseruddin Shah, and it connects the Azadi Courtyard and the Shaykh Hur Ameli sanctuary. The length of this *Ivan* is 17.20 meters, its width 7.20 meters and its height is 20 meters.

D) The Eastern Ivan: This *Ivan* is located opposite the *Ivan-e Talaie Naseri*, and is considered to be very special

to pilgrims because on entering it the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) comes directly into view.

3. The Gowhar-Shad Mosque:

This mosque is located on the southern side of the holy shrine. It is one of the famous mosques of Iran and was built in 821 AH on the orders of Gowhar-Shad Agha, the wife of Shahrukh, son and successor of Amir Timur. Its under-roof area covers 6,048 square meters, while its courtyard is 2,750 square meters.

The walls and the *Ivans* of the mosque display the most beautiful specimens of Islamic art. On the tiles, in beautiful script, are verses of the holy Qur'an and the Divine Attributes, which are the work of Baysunqur Mirza, the son of Shahrukh, who was an accomplished calligrapher. Later, traditions of the Prophet and poetry were added by the famous Safavid calligrapher Muhammad Reza Emami in 1087 AH.

The Gowhar-Shad Mosque²¹ has a public library containing 34,650 books. The new library building has a general reading room and a special section for the holy Qur'an and its recitation. The library is located between the place of ablution (*wazu khaneh*) near the Shaykh Bahauddin sanctuary and the Dar ur-Rahmah Rivaq. The Gowhar-Shad Mosque has four *Ivans* and eight *Shabestans*.

21. The mosque was previously supervised by the Endowments Organization which transferred it to the supervision of the Astan-e Qods Razavi in 1989 AD. The builder of this mosque was Ustad Qawamudin Shirazi, who also built a 'Gowhar-Shad Mosque' in Herat, Afghanistan. *Editor*.

A) The Southern Ivan: This *Ivan* is one of the biggest and highest, and it leads into the mosque. It is called '*Maqsurah*', and is rich in attractive vaults and beautiful tile-work. The height of the *Ivan* is 25.5 meters, its width 12 meters, and its length is 34 meters. The arch is flanked by two minarets, each 43 meters high. The inscriptions in *Sols* style are the works of Baysanqur Mirza, whose name is engraved in the corner of the *Ivan*.

Under the huge dome, whose exterior is covered with green tiles, is an exquisitely carved wooden pulpit dedicated to the 12th Imam (may Allah hasten his reappearance). Ustad Muhammad Khorasani was the craftsman who built this fine specimen of Islamic art in the time of Fath Ali Shah. No iron or nails have been used in this tall pulpit which has a latticed door on its entrance.

B) The Northern Ivan: This *Ivan* leads into the holy shrine to its north through the Dar us-Siyadah Rivaq. On the upper part is a wooden window covered with silver. The inscription on the window shows that it was installed in 1087 AH in the time of Shah Sulaiman Safavi.

C) The Western and Eastern Ivans: The Western Ivan connects the mosque to the Shaykh Bahai sanctuary while the Eastern Ivan connects it to the Imam Khomeini Courtyard.

4. Imam Khomeini Courtyard:

This courtyard is located on the southern part of the holy shrine and faces Imam Reza (A.S.) street. On its east is the Shrine Museum, on its west the Gowhar-Shad Mosque, in

its northwest corner the Shaykh Bahai Rivaq, and on its north is the Azadi Courtyard. The area known as the Imam Khomeini Courtyard was once occupied by the Ali Naqi Mirza Theological School, the Sa'duddin Theological School (*Madrassa-e Paeen-e Pa*) and some shops, which were all demolished because of their deteriorating condition, to make way for this spacious courtyard. Its total area is 10,000 square meters. A clock was recently installed on top of the northern Ivan, and a small dome was also built.

5. Qods Courtyard:

This newly constructed courtyard lies on the southern side of the Gowhar-Shad mosque. Its total area is 2500 square meters, and it has 28 chambers encircling it. On its south is the Ivan-e Qibla, and in its middle is a modern drinking facility. Underneath the courtyard is the cemetery. The courtyard was opened to pilgrims in 1991 AD.

6. Islamic Republic Courtyard:

This newly built courtyard is located near the Shaykh Bahauddin sanctuary and its total area is 10,000 square meters. Two minarets, 30 meters high, flank its two *Ivans* to the north and to the east. This courtyard has a golden *Ivan* and a grill window which connects it to the Dar ul-Wilayah Rivaq and the shrine. On its east side is Dar ur-Rahmah. In the middle of the courtyard are drinking water fountains, while in its northern corner is the Office for Cultural Affairs.

7. Razavi Courtyard:

This new courtyard, the largest yet, with its *Shabestans* and chambers, covers an area of 40,000 square meters. The

large open area is suitable for Friday prayers, daily congregational prayers, supplications, and other religious gatherings. On the eastern and western sides of the Razavi courtyard, two other courtyards, each with an area of 10,000 square meters are being planned.

8. Sanctuaries (*Bast*):

Traditionally, people have taken refuge in safe sanctuaries (*Bast* in Persian) when under political pressures from government officials. In the political and religious history of Iran, the major holy sites have served as places of refuge for the politically persecuted. Similarly, in the shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) also, there were two large areas designated as *Bast* or sanctuary on the two sides of the *Sahn-e Atiq* or Inqelab Courtyard; the 'Shaykh Tusi Sanctuary' (*Bast-e Bala*) and the 'Shaykh Hur-e Ameli Sanctuary' (*Bast-e Paeen*). In the past, the two sanctuaries were marked by a circle of chains, and the distance between them was 340 feet. Facing the sanctuaries was the grill window of the holy shrine.

By 1962 AD, however, the sanctuaries had lost their historical significance, and now they serve as entrances for pilgrims. The Shaykh Tusi Sanctuary used to be in what is now one of the southern entrances of the Islamic Republic Courtyard, opposite the Bookshop of the Publication Institute of the Holy Shrine. This Bookshop, in addition to its own publications, displays many other books on different topics, including history, religion, science,

literature, etc. It is open daily to all pilgrims from morning till evening except on holidays.²²

In recent years two new *Basts* have been built as prayer sanctuaries for pilgrims. They are called the *Bast-e Shaykh Bahauddin* (between the Gowhar-Shad Mosque and the Islamic Republic Courtyard) and the *Bast-e Shaykh Tabarsi* (between The Razavi University of Islamic Sciences and the new library building).

9. *Naqqar-Khaneh*

In earlier times, *Naqqara* or kettle-drums, were beaten at stated intervals at palaces of kings in order to make announcements to the people or to inform them of events. They were usually beaten from atop arches at one of the entrance gates of the palaces called *Naqqar-Khaneh*. In 860 AH (1456 AD), Baber Mirza, the son of Baysunqar bin Shahrukh, came for pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) from Herat. He was visiting the shrine in order to find a cure for his illness which physicians were unable to cure. To announce his presence at the holy shrine, kettle-drums were beaten, and since that time they have become a regular feature at the *Haram*, with their sound heard daily at early dawn, sunset and on all important festivities except the days of mourning. In the

22. It will not be out of place to mention that the main bookshop of this Institute is one of the biggest in Iran with 8,000 titles published on different topics. It covers an area of 1500 square meters, and is located in Mashhad on Imam Khomeini Street opposite Bagh-e-Melli. *Editor.*

month of Ramazan they are beaten before the morning prayer.

Kettle-drums are also beaten when any sick pilgrim gets healed at the shrine. The room containing one big and two small kettle-drums, is on the top of the eastern Ivan of the Inqelab Courtyard, and is known as the *Naqqar Khaneh*. The present *Naqqar-Khaneh* was built in 1966 AD, and it is one of the most attractive examples of Islamic architecture at the shrine.

10. *Saqqa-Khaneh*

In the center of the Inqelab Courtyard is a beautiful drinking water repository known as the *Saqqa-Khaneh*. Nader Shah covered the upper parts of its arches with golden inscriptions, the work of an unknown craftsman, called Ismael. For this reason the *Saqqa-Khaneh Naderi* is also referred to as Ismael's Fountain.

The *Saqqa-Khaneh* is hexagonal in shape and carved from a single-piece of marble. On the orders of Nader Shah the marble was brought from Herat and was installed on the floor of the fountain. The *Saqqa-Khaneh* was renovated in 1968 AD.

11. Clocks and Clock Towers

The clock atop the western Ivan of the Inqelab Courtyard, was installed during the time of Muzaffaruddin Shah in 1900 AD. When it struck, its sound used to be heard in most of the city. In 1966 AD, however, its old mechanism was replaced by a new electronic one. The old clock is now between the Azadi and Imam Khomeini Courtyards.

In 1974 AD the new clock tower atop the western Ivan of the Inqelab Courtyard was completed and capped with a small dome.

After the construction of the Islamic Republic Courtyard a large stone sun-dial was installed in its center to indicate the noon prayer time.

12. Museums

1. The Shrine Museum:

Established in 1945 AD, the museum at the holy shrine is one of most attractive ones in Iran. It is located on the eastern side of the Imam Khomeini Courtyard and was shifted to its present site after expansion in 1977. It has two floors and covers an area of 1500 square meters. Most of the articles on display were donated and dedicated to the shrine by the faithful --including kings and nobles-- over the past centuries.

Some of the important objects of historical value at the museum are as follows:

1. The stone slab which was laid in 516 AH over the blessed tomb of Imam Reza (A.S.). The stone has an epitaph in Kufic script.
2. Coins dating back, both before the advent of Islam and the early Islamic era, including those struck in the name of Imam Reza (A.S.) after he was appointed as heir by Mamun.
3. A big circular *Sang-ab* (stone water bowl) carved from a single piece of black stone. It is 120 cms in height with a diameter of 123 Cm. It was

made in the time of Sultan Muhammad Khwarezm Shah in 597 AH (1202 AD).

4. A collection of rare green-coloured chinaware called '*Saladan*' and precious crystal-ware, belonging to the 8th century AH and thereafter.

5. Golden tablets with *Sols* and *Nastaliq* inscriptions by the calligrapher Ali Reza Abbasi.

6. Beautiful tiles embossed with inscriptions and designs which date back to the 6th century AH and known as *Sultan Sanjeri*.

7. Carpets, armour, armaments and beautiful metal-ware objects.

The primary thing that attracts visitors to the museum is the chronology and development of Islamic arts, since most of the articles on display carry the date, the name of the artisan, or the weaver in the case of carpets, the place of origin, and other important details. Thousands of people visit the museum daily.

2. The Qur'an Museum:

A separate double-storey building was inaugurated in 1985 AD, behind the Shrine Museum, to house the rich collection of holy Qur'ans. On the first floor are drawings and other specimens of Islamic art, while the second floor has manuscripts of the Holy Book written in different styles of calligraphy and belonging to different periods.

The most valuable manuscripts of the holy Qur'an are those attributed to the Imams of the Prophet's Household, which gives this museum all its importance.²³

The first floor has on display beautiful and excellent *Muraqqa's* of the calligraphist Mir Emad, and two beautiful paintings by Ustad Farshchian.

3. Stamp Museum:

This museum was inaugurated in 1991 AD. It covers an area of 500 square meters and has 60 show-cases displaying Iranian and Foreign stamps.

The Iranian stamps total 500 pieces, while the foreign stamp collection is from 183 countries. Among the Iranian stamps on display is the first postal stamp issued on 1868 AD). The other important stamps at the museum are the 'Victor Castien' series printed in Mashhad in 1901 AD. Some other stamps on display are the 'half-blocks' printed in 1875-76 AD in the time of Naseruddin Shah.

13. The Great Library at the Shrine

The Astan-e Qods Razavi owns a number of libraries throughout Iran and in the holy city of Mashhad.²⁴ The

23. Of interest to visitors from the sub-continent are the holy Qur'ans dedicated by Indian rulers, of which the most unique is the manuscript written in a new style by the first Mughal Emperor Muhammad Zahiruddin Babur. The style is known as '*Khatt-e-Baburi*' which Babur invented. Other manuscripts include the illuminated copy of the holy Book dedicated to the shrine by Ibrahim Quli Qutb Shah of Golconda (Hyderabad - Deccan) in 970 AH and the one dedicated by the 4th Mughal Emperor Nuruddin Jahangir in 1014 AH. *Editor.*

central library of Astan-e Qods is housed in a new building at the holy shrine equipped with all modern facilities for lay readers, scholars and researchers. The first library at the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) was established in 612 AH (1215 AD).

The present library has about 418,000 books of which 38,218 are hand-written and 724 are pictorial books. The oldest manuscript dates back to 380 AH, and the oldest printed book is in Latin which was printed in the 15th century AD. The library has books in 36 languages the bulk of them in Arabic and Persian.

One of the most important sections of this library which attracts the visitors is the archives section which contains old newspapers and magazines, which have been classified under 1400 different topics.

The new library has three floors with an under-roof area of 12,000 square meters, and has a capacity for more than a million books.

14. Razavi University of Islamic Sciences

The Razavi University of Islamic Sciences is located to the north of the *Sahn-e Atiq* or Inqelab Courtyard, and was built by Mirza Ja'far who had accumulated a fortune while in the service of the Muslim kings of India. It was

24. Library at Gowhar-shad Mosque (Mashhad), Library at Imam Reza (A.S.) Mosque at the mausoleum of Khaja Rabee' (Mashhad) Imam Sadeq (A.S.) Library at Danishgah Street (Mashhad) Ayatullah Qazvini Library at Mohammadabad. Malik Library of Tehran, Vaziri Library of Yazd, Muravej Library of Yazd, Harendi Library of Kerman, and Ayatullah Borujerdi Library of Borujerd.

constructed in 1059 AH in the Safavid era. It is rectangular in shape and has two floors, surrounded by 90 chambers. It has two big *Ivans* on its north and south, and two small *Ivans* on its east and west. The northern and southern *Ivans* have vaults with beautiful inscriptions in tile-works. It was repaired in 1896 AD during Qajar rule.

The Theological School of Mirza Ja'far because of being old and its lacking in capacity to hold classes for the growing number students, had to be enlarged. But since it was a historical structure, parts of the school were left untouched, and around it new buildings were constructed. This new complex is now called the 'Razavi University of Islamic Sciences'. This university has an under-roof area of 22,000 square meters, and comprises a mosque, meeting halls, 22 class rooms, 250 quarters for students and recreational facilities. It was inaugurated on 11th Zu'l-Qa'dah 1404 AH (1986 AD) on the birthday anniversary of Imam Reza (A.S.).

15. Theological Schools at the Shrine

1. Madrasa-e Bala Sar:

This Theological school is located on the western part of the shrine. On its north are the *Shabestans* of the Gowhar-Shad Mosque, on its east is Dar us-Siyadah, on its south is Dar ul-Wilayah, and on its west it leads to the corridor of the Do-Darb Theological School.

According to the book *Matla ush-Shams*, it was built in 800 AH during the Timurid period. The grave of Mirza Abu'l-Qasem Baber, the son of Baysunqar Mirza bin Shahrukh, is under the dome located on the eastern side of this Theological School.

The two-storey school has four *Ivans*. In the eastern Ivan an inscription in stucco in *Sols* style, gives the date 1091 AH, suggesting that the school was renovated in the time of Shah Sulaiman Safavi. Inside the school beautiful tile-work has been installed.

2. Do-Darb Theological School:

This theological school is also located on the western part of the shrine. On its north is the Shaykh Bahauddin Sanctuary, on its east is the Madrasa-e Bala Sar, on its south is the Dar ul-Wilayah Rivaq and on its west is the 'Islamic Republic Courtyard'.

It was built in 843 AH during the reign of Shahrukh, on the orders of Amir Yousuf bin Amir Shaykh Ali bin Amir Timur who was also known as Ghiyasuddin Yousuf Khajah Bahadur.

The school has two domes, underneath which poetry has been written on tiles in beautiful inscriptions. Under one of the domes is a grave, over which the *Ayat ul-Kursi* (Holy Qur'an 2:255) is engraved. The grave is believed to be that of the builder of the madrasa.

The school has some of the most beautiful and attractive tile-work and inscriptions. It has two floors and several chambers. It was renovated in 1088 AH on the orders of the mother of Shah Sulaiman Safavi.

16. Welfare Facilities at the Holy Shrine and Other Useful Information

1. Banquet Hall for Pilgrims:

The previous banquet hall of the holy shrine used to be in the Shaykh Tusi Sanctuary. But due to the increase in the

number of pilgrims, a new banquet hall was built at the Shaykh Hur-e Ameli Sanctuary, opposite the northern entrance of the Azadi Courtyard.

The present banquet hall was built in 1974 AD. It has three storeys and covers an area of 850 square meters. Everyday, at noon and at evening, pilgrims are served meals. An estimated three-to-four thousand pilgrims are served meals daily at the banquet hall²⁵.

On the west side of the banquet hall, sheep and goats are kept for sale at special discount price for the pilgrims. Pilgrims who make vow or *nazr* often give their offerings to the holy shrine in the form of gold, money, carpets etc. Pilgrims who make vows, often buy sheep and offer them to the shrine kitchen to be served at the banquet hall.

2. Imam Reza (A.S.) Clinic:

One of the health centers affiliated to the shrine is the 'Imam Reza (A.S.) Clinic.' It is located in the Shaykh Hur-e Ameli Sanctuary and provides pilgrims with such medical services as outpatient, ENT, dental care and injections. It also has a pharmacy. The clinic renders service free of charge to all pilgrims.

3. Depository Office:

For the convenience of pilgrims and in order to take care of their personal valuables, depository offices have been established both inside and outside the holy shrine.

25. The foreign & local pilgrims are served lunch at the Banquet Hall free of charge. To be the guest of Imam Reza (A.S.) at the Banquet Hall the Foreign Pilgrims should take their Passports to the office located beside the tomb of Shaykh Hur Ameli at 'Inqelab Courtyard' and obtain the necessary coupons.

These offices are located in the Inqelab, Azadi, Imam Khomeini and Islamic Republic Courtyards, as well as in some *Rivaqs* inside the shrine.

4. Office For Receiving Offerings (*Nuzurat*):

For receiving offerings from the pilgrims various *Nuzurat* Offices (plural of *Nazr* or vow) have been established at the holy shrine. These are located in the Dar ush-Sharaf, Dar us-Sarour and Dar ul-Wilayah *Rivaqs*, and at the Azadi, Imam Khomeini, Gowhar-Shad Mosque and Inqelab Courtyards.

Pilgrims dedicate their offerings in cash or any other valuable and in return they get receipts. There is also a chamber in the Inqelab Courtyard which sells wheat for the feeding of pigeons at the holy shrine.

5. Lost and Found Office:

This office is located at the Inqelab and Islamic Republic Courtyards and is responsible for lost persons or articles.

6. Offices of Religious Affairs:

These offices are located at the Azadi and Gowhar-Shad Mosque Courtyards. Also the office for receiving religious funds (*Khums*, *Zakat* etc.) is located at the Azadi Courtyard.

7. Security Office:

A Security Office is located at Inqelab Courtyard and handles disciplinary affairs and possible social abuses such as theft.

8. Office For Assisting Pilgrims:

This office is located at the Inqelab Courtyard to provide help and assistance to needy pilgrims.

9. Office of Pilgrims Healed at The Holy Shrine:

Office for pilgrims healed at the holy shrine is located in the Inqelab Courtyard. It registers and maintains a record of pilgrims have been miraculously cured at the shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.).

10. Other Offices:

The 'Office of Prayer Leaders' is located at the Gowhar-Shad Mosque and there are also some places reserved for teaching and recitation of the Qur'an in the mosque as well. The recitation program of the Holy Qur'an is held here daily after the evening prayers.

11. Office for Foreign Pilgrims:

The office of Cultural Affairs and the International Public Relations Department for Foreign Pilgrims is located at the Islamic Republic Courtyard.

12. Office of Administrative Affairs:

The Propagation Department of the Holy Shrine has its offices at the Gowhar-Shad Mosque Courtyard and the Imam Khomeini Courtyard. The Office for handling funeral services is located at the Azadi Courtyard.

13. Toilets and Ablution Places:

For the convenience of pilgrims, toilets and ablution places have been set up at the following courtyards:

1. Azadi Courtyard
2. Inqelab Courtyard
3. Qods Courtyard
4. Shaykh Hur-e Ameli Sanctuary

5. Shaykh Tusi Sanctuary
6. Shaykh Bahai Sanctuary

14. Shoe Check-in Kiosks:

In various courtyards of the shrine there are number of 'Shoe Keeping Places' set up separately for men, women and families.

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14. *Muntahi al-Amaal* -- Shaykh Abbas Qomi

APPENDIX

The following is the detailed *Ziyarat* of Imam Reza (A.S.) from the book *Mafatih al-Jinan* and its English translation has been taken from the 'Prayer Almanac' published by Peer Muhammad Ibrahim Trust, Karachi, Pakistan.

Editor's Note:

Before entering the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) it is recommended to recite: "*Allahu Akbar, La Ilaha Ill-Allah, Subahan Allah, Al-Hamdulillah*", several times. Then recite the following: "*Bismilahi wa billahi wa 'ala millati Rasulillahi Sallallahu 'Alayhi wa Aalihi, Ashhadu an la ilaha illallahu wahdahu lasharika lahu, wa Ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'Abdahu wa Rasulahu wa anna 'Aliyan Waliullah*". (In the name of Allah and by the authority of Allah and the creed of the Messenger of Allah, peace upon him and his progeny. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, who is One and has no partner. I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger, and Ali is the Friend of Allah).

1. After entering the holy shrine, stand with your face towards the *Zareeh* and your back towards the *Qibla*, make the intention (*niyyat*), and recite the *Ziyarat* that follows.
2. After recitation of *Ziyarat* recite the *Salawaat*.
3. Pray a two-rak'at *Salat-uz-Ziyarat*, with *Sura al-Hamd* and *Sura Yaseen* in the first *rakat* and *Sura al-Hamd* and *Sura ar-Rahman* in the second.

ZIYARAT OF IMAM REZA (A.S.):

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, who is One and without any partner; And I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger and verily he is the Chief of the ancients and the moderns. Verily, he is the Chief of the Prophets and the Messengers.

O Allah send blessings on Muhammad, Your Servant, Your Messenger and Your Prophet, the Chief of all that has been created by You; blessings which no one is able to measure other than You.

O Allah send blessings on the Ameer ul Momineen, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Your Servant, the brother of Your Messenger, whom You selected for Your knowledge, made him a guide for those of Your creation You willed; An Evident Proof for those who pay careful attention to Your message, (in order) to manage the affairs of the religion according to Your (system of) justice, to apply Your commands (to settle the issues) among Your creatures, and thus make secure (Your will and command) in all matters. Peace upon him and the mercy and blessings of Allah.

O Allah send blessings on Fatimah, the daughter of Your Prophet, the wife of Your Friend, the mother of the two sons, Hasan and Husain, the Leaders of the Youth of Paradise. She is Pure, Purified, Pious, Excellent, Content, and Pleased; Wise Leader of all the Women of Paradise.

Blessings (on her) which no one is able to measure other than You.

O Allah send blessings on Hasan and Husain, the two sons of Your Prophet, the Leaders of the Youth of Paradise; The Established Authority among Your creation; The two Evident Proofs for those who pay careful attention to Your Message, who managed the affairs of the religion according to Your (system of) justice, and applied Your commands (to settle the issues) among Your creatures.

O Allah send blessings on Ali bin Husain, Your Servant; The Established Authority among Your creation; The Evident Proof for those who pay careful attention to Your Message, who managed the affairs of the religion according to Your (system of) justice, and applied Your commands (to settle the issues) among Your creatures, the Chief among the worshippers.

O Allah send blessings on Muhammad bin Ali, Your Servant, Your Representative in the earth, the one who split open the knowledge of Prophets.

O Allah send blessings on Ja'far bin Muhammad, the Truthful, Your Servant, the Guardian of Your religion, Your Decisive Argument over all mankind, the Truthful among the beneficent.

O Allah send blessings on Musa bin Ja'far, Your Upright Servant, Your Speech among Your creatures, the Spokesman by Your command, Your Decisive Argument over all mankind.

O Allah send blessings on Ali bin Musa the Most Content, the Chosen, Your Servant, the Guardian of Your religion, the one who established Your justice and called (made earnest presentation of arguments) towards Your religion which is the religion of his truthful ancestors. Blessings (on him) which no one is able to measure other than You.

O Allah send blessings on Muhammad bin Ali, Your Servant and Your friend who established by Your command, who invited (people) unto Your path.

O Allah send blessings on Ali bin Muhammad, Your Servant and Your Guardian of religion.

O Allah send blessings on Hasan bin Ali who put Your system into practice, the Established Authority among Your creatures Your Demonstrator who carried out the mission of Your Prophet, Your Witness over mankind, distinguished with Your miracles who called and reminded people to obey You and Your Messenger; Your blessings be on all of them.

O Allah send blessings on Your argument and Your friend, the Established Representative among Your creation; perfect, growing and everlasting blessings; expedite his arrival and help him. Gather us with him in this world and in the Hereafter.

O Allah I seek Your nearness through my love for them. I make friends with their friends and I oppose their enemies. So, on account of them, give me good of this world and

the Hereafter and keep away from me the evil of this world and the Hereafter, and the dreadful fright of the Day of Judgement.

(Sit near the upper side of the blessed tomb and recite):

Peace be on you, O the Representative of Allah!

Peace be on you, O the Evident Proof of Allah!

Peace be on you, O the Light of Allah in the darkness of this (ignorant) world!

Peace be on you, O the Legatee of Adam, the Sincere Friend of Allah!

Peace be on you, O the Legatee of Noah, the Prophet of Allah!

Peace be on you, O the Legatee of Abraham, the Intimate Friend of Allah!

Peace be on you, O the Legatee of Ismael, the Sacrifice offered to Allah!

Peace be on you, O the Legatee of Moses who spoke to Allah!

Peace be on you, O the Legatee of Jesus the Spirit from Allah!

Peace be on you, O the Legatee of Ameer ul-Momineen, the Representative of Allah, the Executor of the will of the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds!

Peace be on you, O the Legatee of Fatimah az-Zahra!

Peace be on you, O the Legatee of Hasan and Husain, the Leaders of the Youth of Paradise!

Peace be on you, O the Legatee of Ali bin Husain, the Pride of the worshippers!

Peace be on you, O the Legatee of Muhammad bin Ali, the Deeply-Versed in the wisdom of the ancients and the moderns!

Peace be on you, O the Legatee of Ja'far bin Muhammad, the Truthful, the Virtuous!

Peace be on you, O the Inheritor of Musa bin Ja'far!

Peace be on you, O the Truthful, the Martyr!

Peace be upon you, O the Beneficent executor, the Pious!

I bear witness that, verily, you established the prayers, gave the prescribed share to the needy, enjoined the lawful and forbade the unlawful, sincerely served Allah, till the inevitable came unto you.

Peace be on you, O Aba'l-Hasan, and mercy and blessings of Allah be on you.

(If possible clasp the holy shrine and recite):

O Allah I had left my place of domicile to go towards You and crossed many a town in the hope of getting Your mercy, therefore, do not disappoint me, do not send me away without awarding that which I need, have mercy on my restless agitation near the grave of the son of Your Messenger's brother, Your blessings be on him and on his descendants,

My father and mother be your ransom O my Mawla! (master), I have come to visit you, be a ransom and take refuge with you from the excesses I indulged into, from the burden of sins that I carry on my back;

So on the day of distress, be my advocate before Allah, because you enjoy special privileges in the presence of Allah,

and He shows respect for you and brings honour to you.

(Raise the right hand and placing the left hand on the shrine if possible, say):

O Allah I seek Your nearness through my love and friendship for them (the Ahl ul-Bait); I love the last of them as I love the first of them, and avoid intimate association with anyone other than them (the Ahl ul-Bait).

The Curse of Allah be on those who subverted Your favour, made accusations against Your Prophet, denied Your revelation, ridiculed Your Imam and gave preference to nonentities over the 'Aal-e Muhammad.

O Allah I seek Your nearness by calling down curses on them. I keep myself aloof from them, in this world and in the Hereafter; O the Beneficent!

(Go towards the feet of the blessed tomb and say):

Blessings of Allah be on you, O Abal-Hasan!

Blessings of Allah be on your soul and your body! You suffered patiently and exercised self-control, (although) you were truthful and your truthfulness had been confirmed; Allah destroyed him who gave the orders to kill you, and him who carried it out.

SALAWAT

O Allah shower blessings upon Ali ibn Musa ar-Reza al Murteza, the pure and pious Imam and Your witness over all those upon the earth and those beneath it, the truthful, the martyr-blessings that be: manifold, perfect and pure, continuous and unbroken, one after another and that be better than what You have bestowed upon any of Your Friends (A wliya).

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَسُبْحَانَ اللهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
 بِسْمِ اللهِ وَبِاللهِ وَعَلَى مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ
 وَآلِهِ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ
 أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَأَنَّ عَلِيًّا وَلِيُّ اللهِ.
 أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ
 مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَأَنَّ سَيِّدَ الْأَوْلِيَيْنِ وَالْآخِرِينَ
 وَأَنَّ سَيِّدَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ
 عَبْدِكَ وَرَسُولِكَ وَنَبِيِّكَ وَسَيِّدِ خَلْقِكَ أَجْمَعِينَ صَلَوَةٌ
 لَا يَقْوَى عَلَى إِحْصَائِهَا غَيْرُكَ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى أَمِيرِ
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِيطَالِبٍ عَبْدِكَ وَأَخِي رَسُولِكَ
 الَّذِي أَنْتَجَبْتَهُ بِعِلْمِكَ وَجَعَلْتَهُ هَادِيًا لِمَنْ شِئْتَ مِنْ
 خَلْقِكَ وَالذَّلِيلَ عَلَى مَنْ بَعَثْتَهُ بِرِسَالَتِكَ وَدَيَانَ
 الدِّينِ بِعَدْلِكَ وَفَضْلِ قَضَائِكَ بَيْنَ خَلْقِكَ وَالْمُهَيِّمِ
 عَلَى ذَلِكَ كُلِّهِ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْهِ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ
 اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتِ نَبِيِّكَ وَرَوْجَةِ وَلِيِّكَ وَأُمَّ

السَّبْطَيْنِ الْحَسَنِ وَالْحُسَيْنِ سَيِّدِي شَبَابِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ
الطُّهُرَةِ الطَّاهِرَةِ الْمُطَهَّرَةِ النَّقِيَّةِ النَّقِيَّةِ الرَّضِيَّةِ الرَّكَيَّةِ
سَيِّدَةِ نِسَاءِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ أَجْمَعِينَ صَلَوةٌ لَا يَقْوَى عَلَى
إِحْضَائِهَا غَيْرُكَ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى الْحَسَنِ وَالْحُسَيْنِ
سِبْطِي نَبِيِّكَ وَسَيِّدِي شَبَابِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ الْقَائِمِينَ فِي
خَلْقِكَ وَالذَّلِيلِينَ عَلَى مَنْ بَعَثْتَ بِرِسَالَتِكَ وَدِيَانِي
الدِّينِ بِعَدْلِكَ وَفَضْلِي قَضَائِكَ بَيْنَ خَلْقِكَ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ
عَلَى عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَبْدِكَ الْقَائِمِ فِي خَلْقِكَ
وَالذَّلِيلِ عَلَى مَنْ بَعَثْتَ بِرِسَالَتِكَ وَدِيَانَ الدِّينِ
بِعَدْلِكَ وَفَضْلِ قَضَائِكَ بَيْنَ خَلْقِكَ سَيِّدِ الْعَابِدِينَ اللَّهُمَّ
صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ عَبْدِكَ وَخَلِيفَتِكَ فِي أَرْضِكَ
بِأَقْرَبِ عِلْمِ النَّبِيِّينَ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ
الصَّادِقِ عَبْدِكَ وَوَلِيِّ دِينِكَ وَحُجَّتِكَ عَلَى خَلْقِكَ
أَجْمَعِينَ الصَّادِقِ النَّبَاؤِ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُوسَى بْنِ
جَعْفَرِ عَبْدِكَ الصَّالِحِ وَلِسَانِكَ فِي خَلْقِكَ النَّاطِقِ
بِحُكْمِكَ وَالْحُجَّةِ عَلَى بَرِيَّتِكَ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى عَلِيٍّ

بِنِ مُوسَى الرِّضَا المُرْتَضَى عَبْدِكَ وَوَلِيِّ دِينِكَ الْقَائِمِ
 بَعْدَكَ وَالِدَاعِي الِى دِينِكَ وَدِينِ آبَائِهِ الصَّادِقِينَ
 صَلَوةً لَا يَقْوَى عَلَى إِخْصَائِهَا غَيْرُكَ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى
 مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ عَبْدِكَ وَوَلِيِّكَ الْقَائِمِ بِأَمْرِكَ وَالِدَاعِي
 إِلَى سَبِيلِكَ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى عَلِيِّ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ عَبْدِكَ
 وَوَلِيِّ دِينِكَ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ الْعَامِلِ
 بِأَمْرِكَ الْقَائِمِ فِي خَلْقِكَ وَحُجَّتِكَ الْمُؤَدِّي عَنْ نَبِيِّكَ
 وَشَاهِدِكَ عَلَى خَلْقِكَ الْمَخْصُوصِ بِكَرَامَتِكَ الدَّاعِي
 إِلَى طَاعَتِكَ وَطَاعَةِ رَسُولِكَ صَلَوَاتِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَجْمَعِينَ
 اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى حُجَّتِكَ وَوَلِيِّكَ الْقَائِمِ فِي خَلْقِكَ
 صَلَوةً تَامَةً نَامِيَةً بَاقِيَةً تُعَجِّلُ بِهَا فَرَجَهُ وَتَنْصُرُهُ بِهَا
 وَتَجْعَلُنَا مَعَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَنْقَرْتُ إِلَيْكَ
 بِحُبِّهِمْ وَأَوْلِيٍّ وَلِيَّهُمْ وَأَعَادِي عَدُوَّهُمْ فَارزُقني بِهِمْ
 خَيْرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاصْرِفْ عَنِّي بِهِمْ شَرَّ الدُّنْيَا
 وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَهْوَالَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ.

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَلِيَّ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا حُجَّةَ اللَّهِ

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا نُورَ اللَّهِ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ السَّلَامُ
 عَلَيْكَ يَا عَمُودَ الدِّينِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ آدَمَ
 صِفْوَةَ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ نُوحِ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ
 عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلِ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا
 وَارِثَ إِسْمَاعِيلَ ذَبِيحِ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ
 مُوسَى كَلِيمِ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ عِيسَى رُوحِ
 اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ
 عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيِّ وَوَلِيِّ اللَّهِ وَوَصِيِّ
 رَسُولِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ فَاطِمَةَ
 الزَّهْرَاءِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ الْحَسَنِ وَالْحُسَيْنِ
 سَيِّدِي شَبَابِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ عَلِيٍّ
 بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ زَيْنِ الْعَابِدِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ
 مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ بَاقِرِ عِلْمِ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ السَّلَامُ
 عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ الصَّادِقِ النَّبَاةِ السَّلَامُ
 عَلَيْكَ يَا وَارِثَ مُوسَى بْنِ جَعْفَرِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا
 الصَّدِيقُ الشَّهِيدُ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْوَصِيُّ النَّبَاةُ النَّقِيُّ

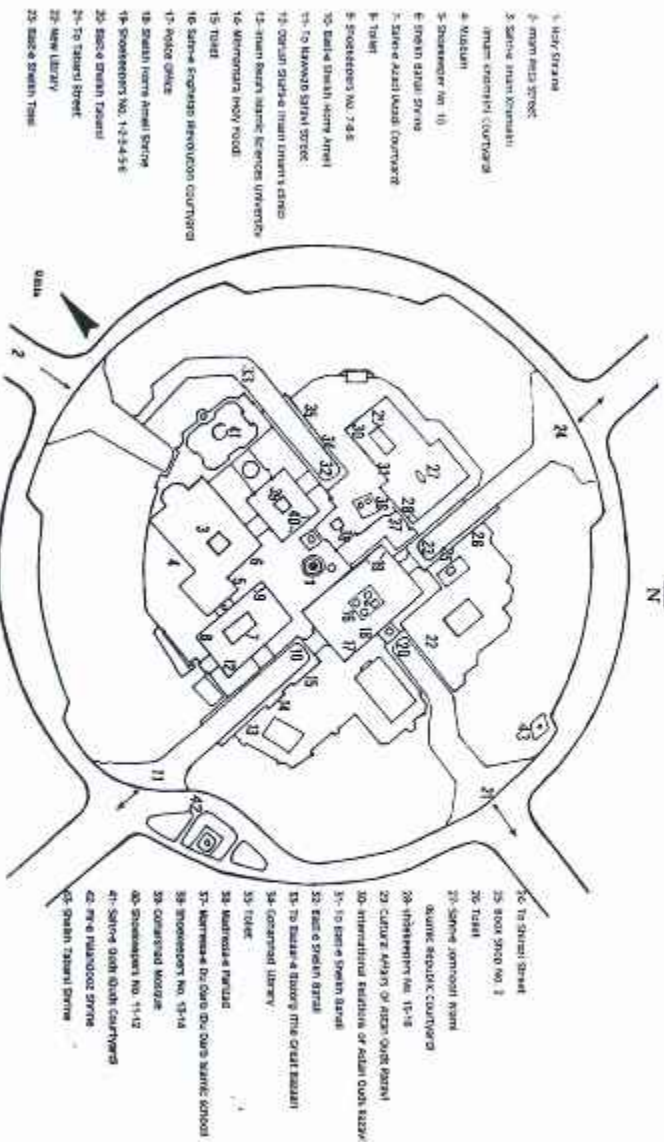
أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ قَدْ أَقَمْتَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَيْتَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرْتَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَيْتَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَعَبَدْتَ اللَّهَ حَتَّى آتَيْكَ
الْيَقِينَ السَّلَامَ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَا الْحَسَنِ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ
وَبَرَكَاتُهُ.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ صَمَدٌ مِنْ أَرْضِي وَقَطَعْتَ الْبِلَادَ
رَجَاءَ رَحْمَتِكَ فَلَا تُخَيِّبْنِي وَلَا تَرُدَّنِي بِغَيْرِ قَضَاءٍ
حَاجَتِي وَأَرْحَمِ تَقَلُّبِي عَلَى قَبْرِ ابْنِ أَخِي رَسُولِكَ
صَلَوَاتِكَ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بِأَبِي أَنْتَ وَأُمِّي يَا مَوْلَايَ أَتَيْتَكَ
زَائِرًا وَافِدًا عَائِدًا مِمَّا جَنَيْتُ عَلَى نَفْسِي وَاحْتَطَبْتُ
عَلَى ظَهْرِي فَكُنْ لِي شَافِعًا إِلَى اللَّهِ يَوْمَ فَتْرِي
وَفَاقَتِي فَلَكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَقَامٌ مَحْمُودٌ وَأَنْتَ عِنْدَهُ وَجِيهٌ.
اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي اتَّقَرَّبُ إِلَيْكَ بِحُبِّهِمْ وَبِوَالِيَتِهِمْ أَتَوَلَّى
أَخْرَهُمْ بِمَا تَوَلَّيْتُ بِهِ أَوْلَهُمْ وَأَبْرَاءَ مِنْ كُلِّ وَبَلِيغَةٍ
دُونَهُمْ اللَّهُمَّ الْعَنِ الَّذِينَ بَدَّلُوا نِعْمَتَكَ وَأَتَّهُمُوا نَيْبِكَ
وَجَحَدُوا بِآيَاتِكَ وَسَخِرُوا بِإِمَامِكَ وَحَمَلُوا النَّاسَ
عَلَى أَكْتافِ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي اتَّقَرَّبُ إِلَيْكَ بِاللَّعْنَةِ

عَلَيْهِمْ وَالْبِرَاءَةَ مِنْهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ يَا رَحْمَنُ.
صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَا الْحَسَنِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيَّ
رُوحِكَ وَبَدَنِكَ صَبَرْتَ وَأَنْتَ الصَّادِقُ الْمُصَدِّقُ قَتَلَ
اللهُ مَنْ قَتَلَكَ بِالْأَيْدِي وَاللُّسُنِ.

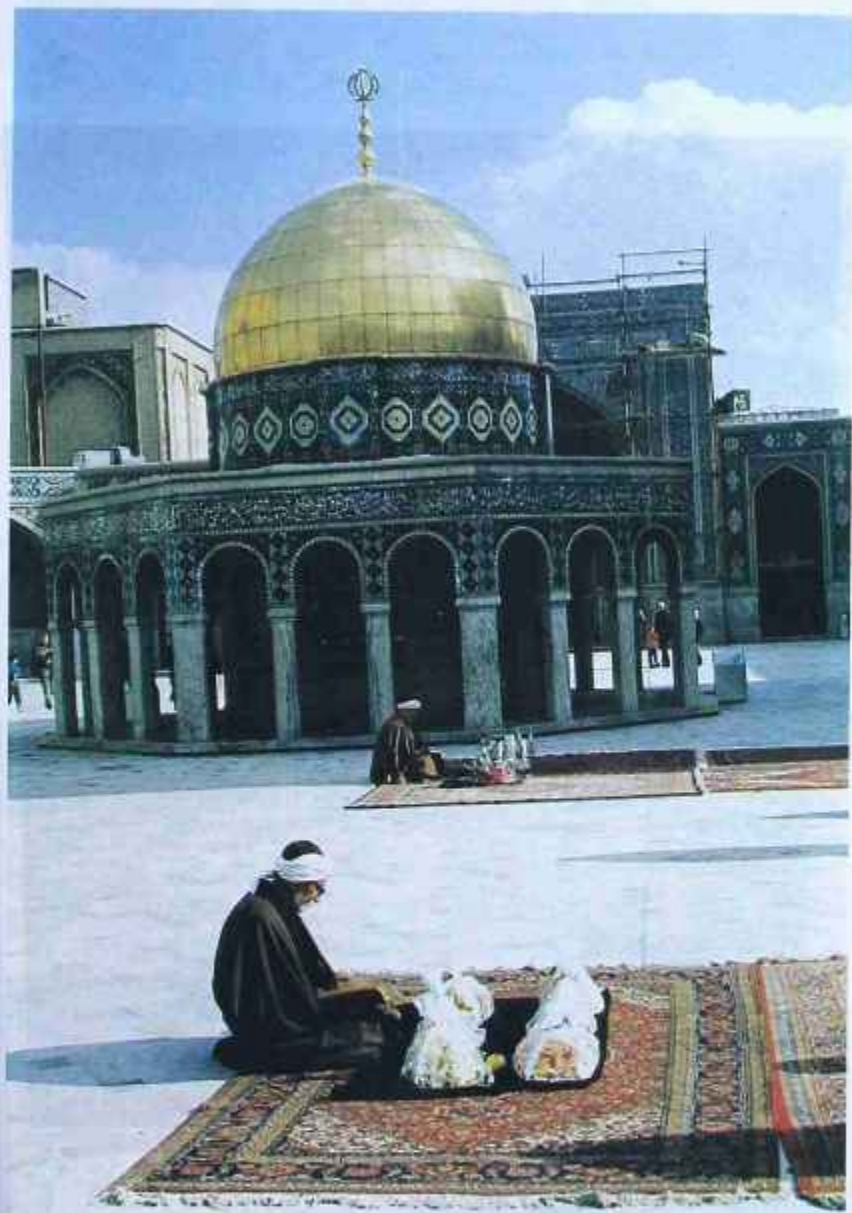
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى عَلِيِّ بْنِ مُوسَى الرِّضَا المُرْتَضَى
الإمامِ التَّقِيِّ النَّقِيِّ وَحُجَّتِكَ عَلَيَّ مِنْ فَوْقِ الأَرْضِ
وَمَنْ تَحْتَ السَّمَاءِ الصِّدِّيقِ الشَّهِيدِ صَلَوةً كَثِيرَةً تَامَّةً
زَاكِةً مُتَوَاصِلَةً مُتَوَاتِرَةً مُتَرَادِفَةً كَأَفْضَلِ مَا صَلَّيْتَ
عَلَيَّ أَحَدٍ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءِكَ.

The Plan of Holy Shrine and Buildings around it



- 1 Holy Shrine
- 2 Imam Reza Street
- 3 Shrine Imam Khomeini
- 4 Imam Khomeini Courtyard
- 5 Masjid
- 6 Shrine Imam Ali
- 7 Shrine Imam Zaynab
- 8 Shrine Imam Hussain
- 9 Shrine Imam Mehdi
- 10 Shrine Imam Jafar
- 11 Shrine Imam Musa
- 12 Shrine Imam Ali Akbar
- 13 Shrine Imam Ali Reza
- 14 Shrine Imam Karim
- 15 Shrine Imam Reza
- 16 Shrine Imam Hassan
- 17 Shrine Imam Ali
- 18 Shrine Imam Zaynab
- 19 Shrine Imam Hussain
- 20 Shrine Imam Mehdi
- 21 Shrine Imam Jafar
- 22 Shrine Imam Musa
- 23 Shrine Imam Ali Akbar
- 24 Shrine Imam Ali Reza
- 25 Shrine Imam Karim

- 26 Shrine Imam Reza
- 27 Shrine Imam Karim
- 28 Shrine Imam Mehdi
- 29 Shrine Imam Jafar
- 30 Shrine Imam Musa
- 31 Shrine Imam Ali Akbar
- 32 Shrine Imam Ali Reza
- 33 Shrine Imam Karim
- 34 Shrine Imam Mehdi
- 35 Shrine Imam Jafar
- 36 Shrine Imam Musa
- 37 Shrine Imam Ali Akbar
- 38 Shrine Imam Ali Reza
- 39 Shrine Imam Karim
- 40 Shrine Imam Mehdi
- 41 Shrine Imam Jafar
- 42 Shrine Imam Musa
- 43 Shrine Imam Ali Akbar
- 44 Shrine Imam Ali Reza
- 45 Shrine Imam Karim



Qods Courtyard

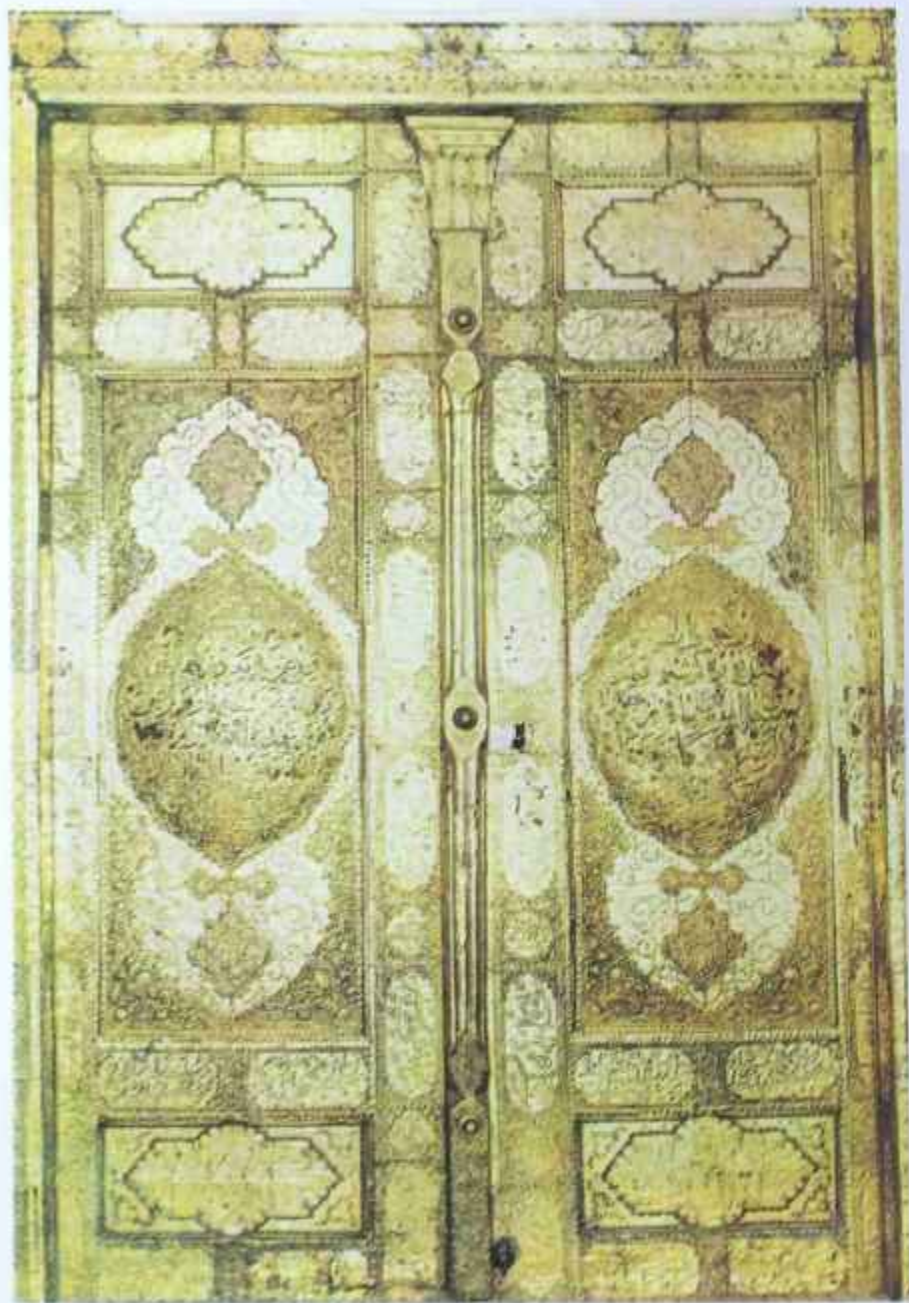


A hand woven carpet known as 'The Seven Cities of Love' woven in Isfahan in the year 1394 A.H. (1973 AD), Size : 3.70 x 4.6 meters. Silk and Wool has been used.



**Metal Hookah studded with turquoise - 12 AH
(17th Century - Isfahan)**

موزه هنرهای اسلامی، تهران
کتابخانه و موزه اسناد ملی، تهران
شماره ثبت: ۱۳۸۴/۱۳۸۴
سازمان اسناد و کتابخانه ملی جمهوری اسلامی ایران



'Gold Plated Door' previously at the entrance of blessed shrine from 'Dar-ul-Huffaz' dated 1275 A.H. (1854 AD), presently it is kept in the shrine museum.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ عَلَىكَ
الْقُرْآنَ الْعَرَبِيَّ فَتَعْلَمُ أَنَّ
الْقُرْآنَ الْحَقُّ وَاللَّهُ يَشْفَعُ
عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّذِينَ لَا
حِزْبَ لَكُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ فِي السُّعْيِ
أُمَّةً يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجَالَ
وَيَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَعْقَابِ بِإِذْنِ
اللَّهِ لِيُحْزِنَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَيُجْزَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَجْرَهُم
بِأَسْفَلَ السُّفْلِ فِي أُولَئِكَ
سُجُودٌ



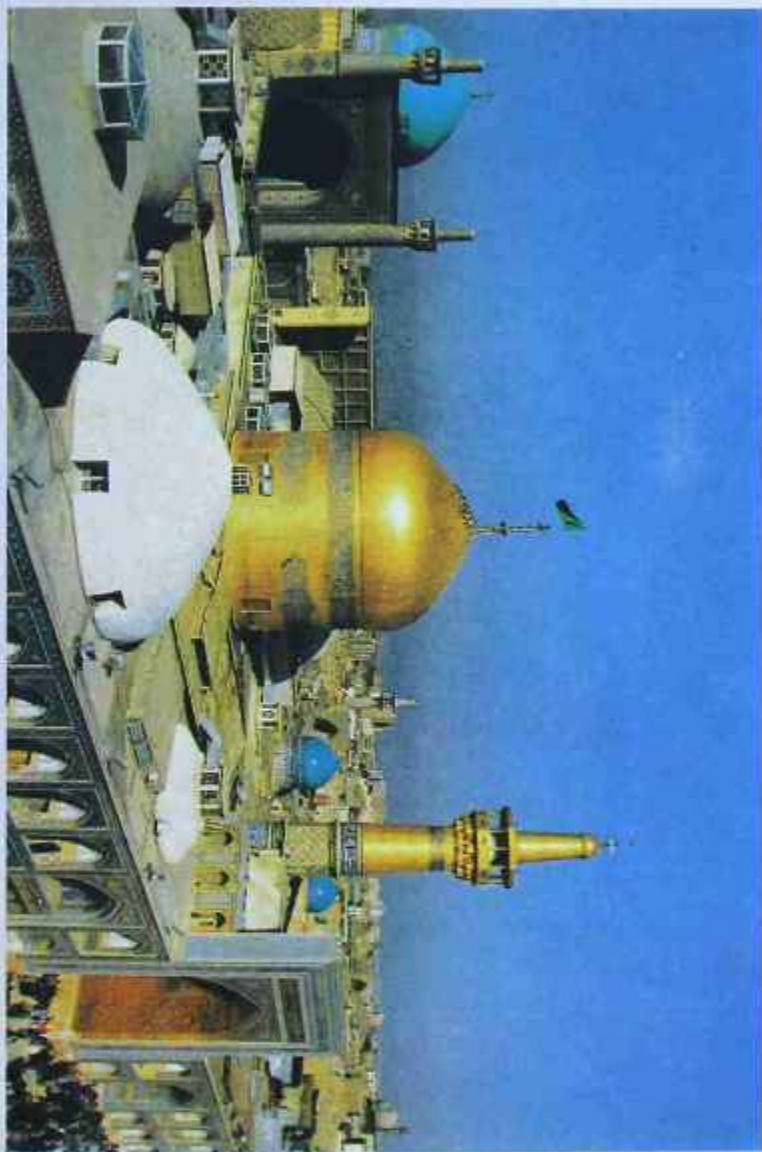
Verses of Holy Qur'an in Kufic script on deer-skin attributed to Imam Reza (A.S.)



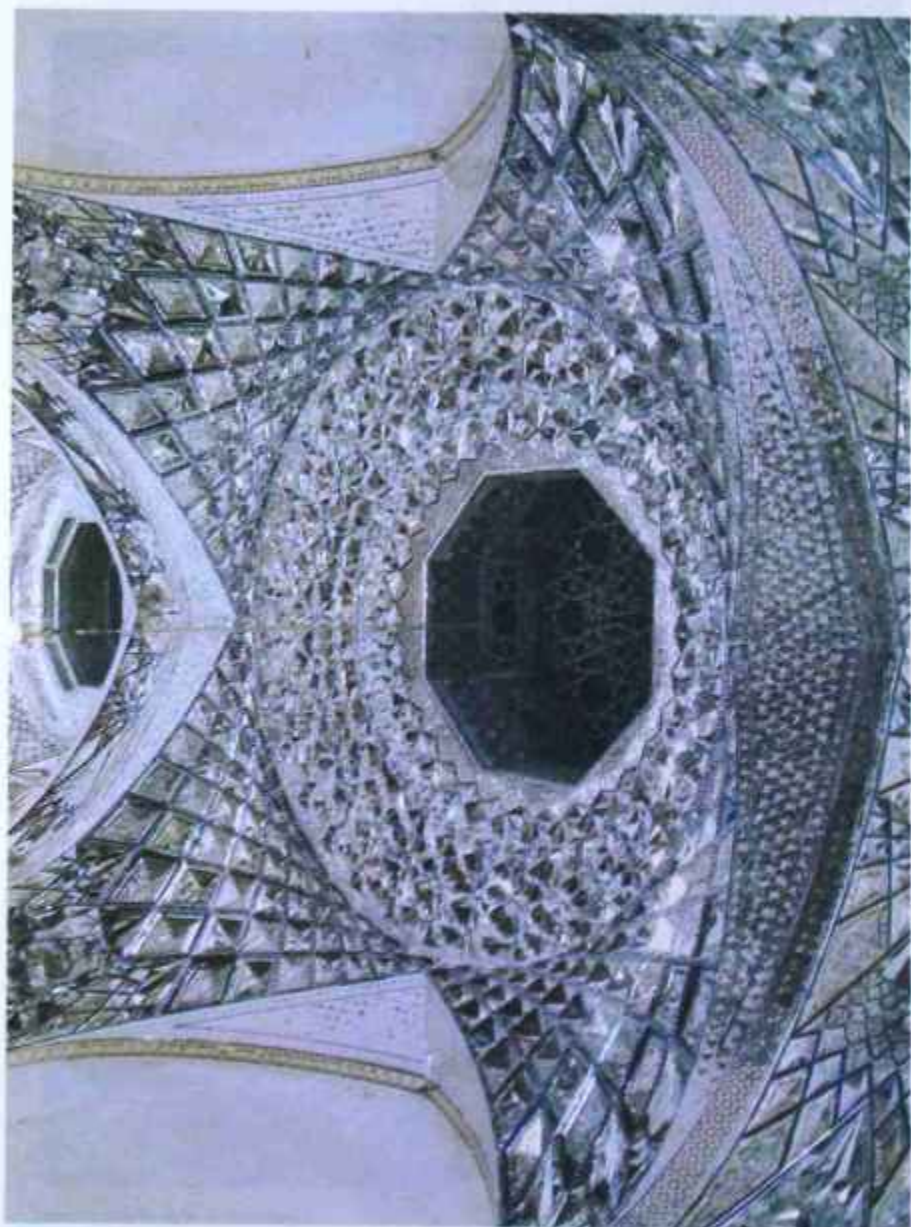
Tomb stone of Imam Reza (A.S.) dated 516 A.H., (1095 AD), which is presently kept in the shrine museum.



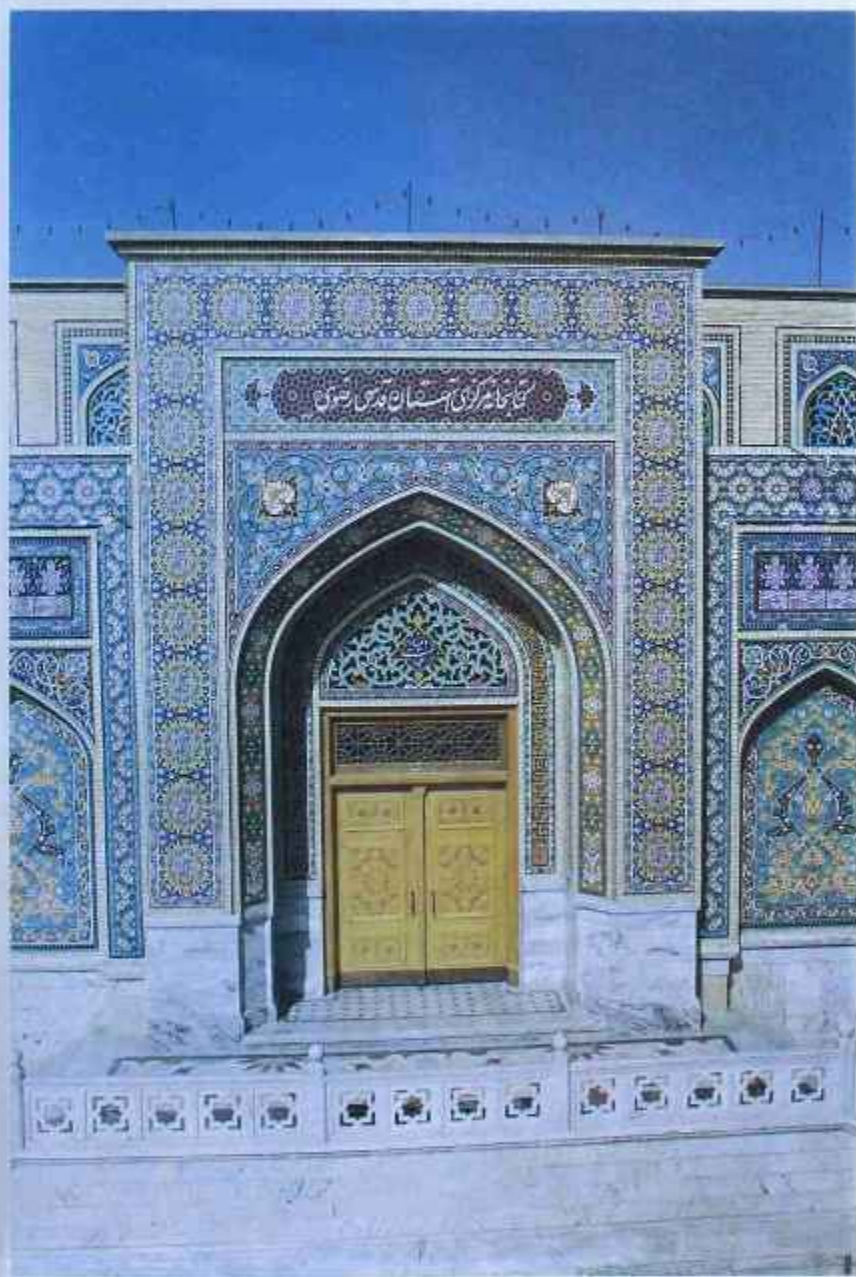
Verses of Holy Qur'an in Kufic script on deer skin
attributed to Imam Hasan (A.S.)



A panoramic view of the shrine.



A view of the mirror-work on the ceiling
of Dar-ul-Wilayah.



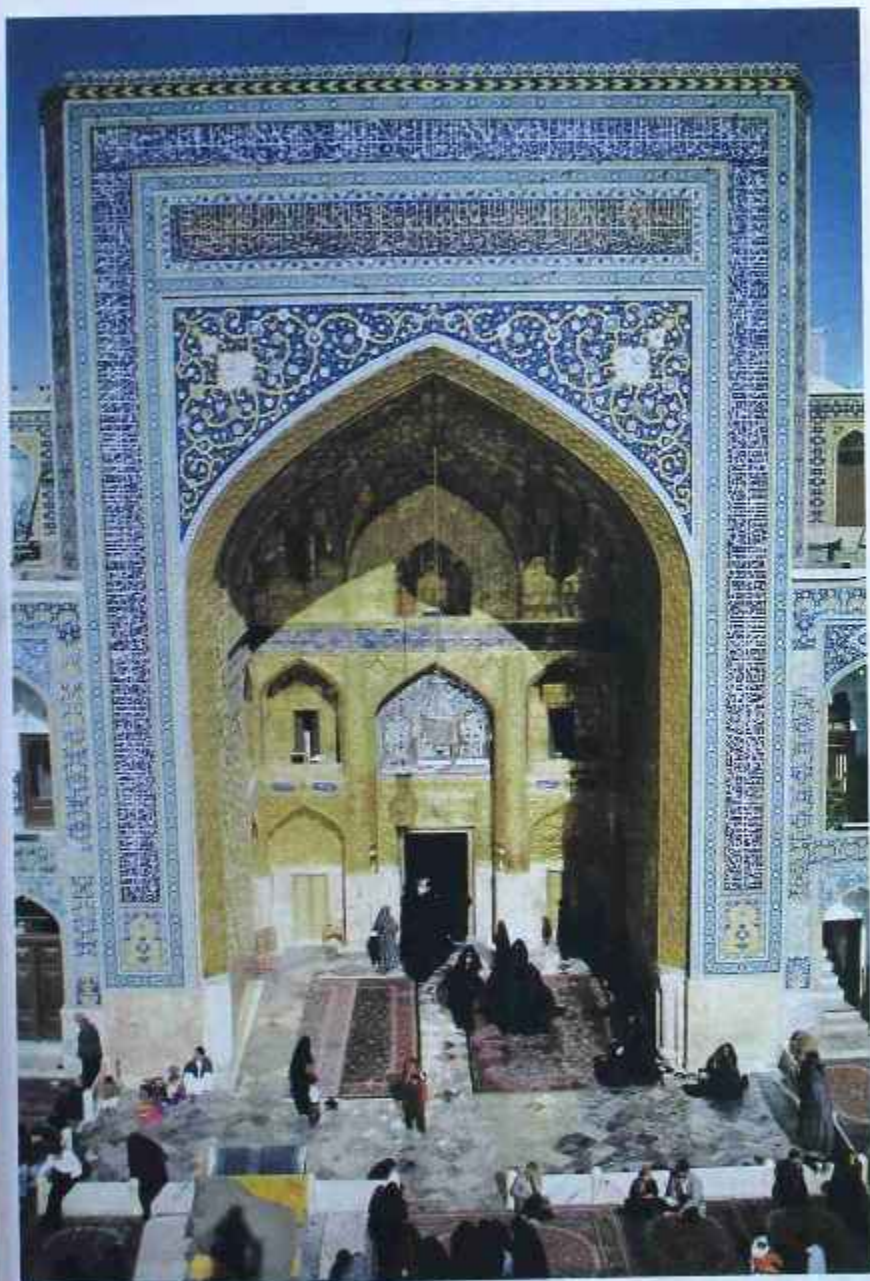
The great library at the holy shrine.



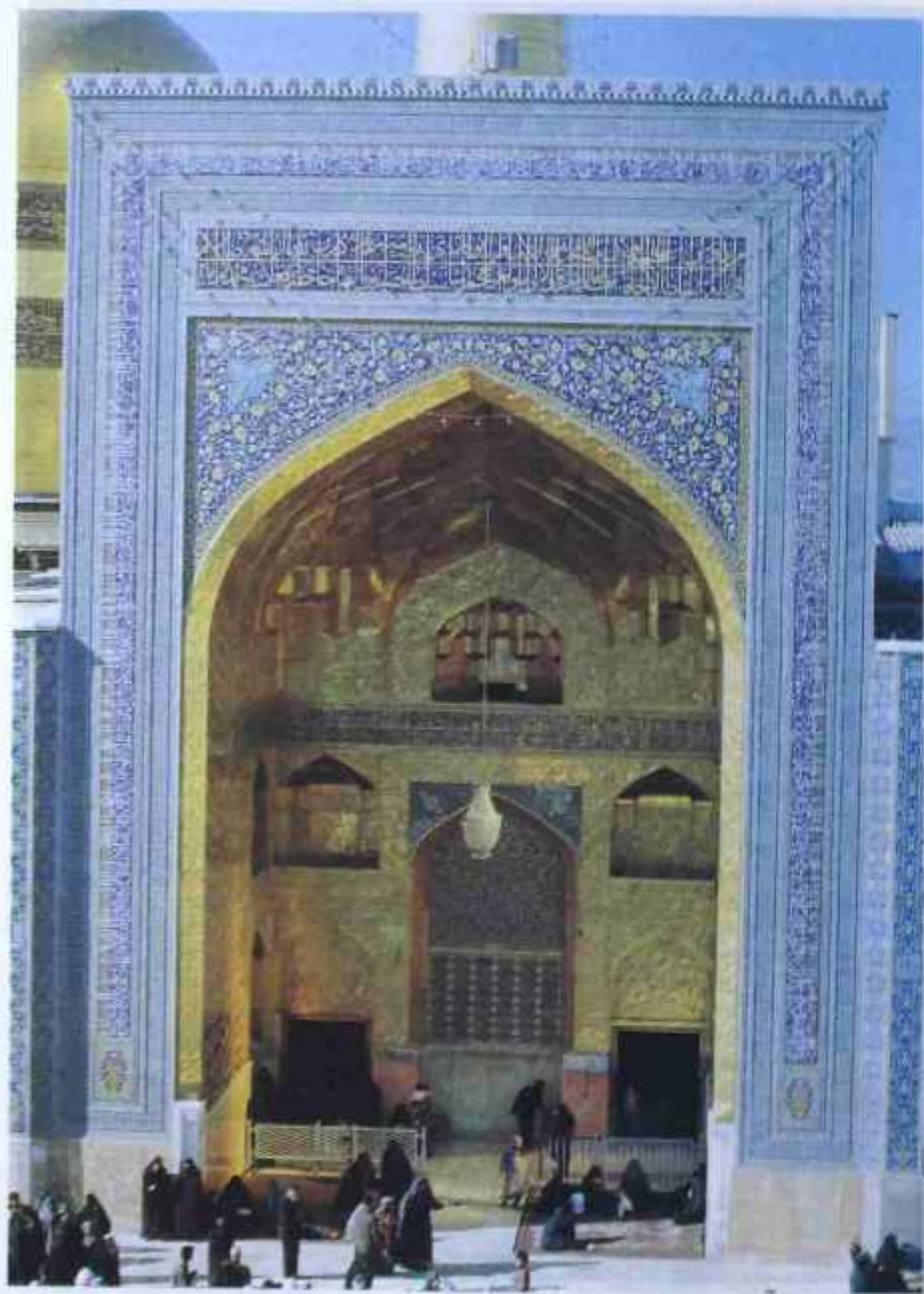
A view of the Dar-ul-Huffaz Rivaz

www.dar-ul-huffaz.org

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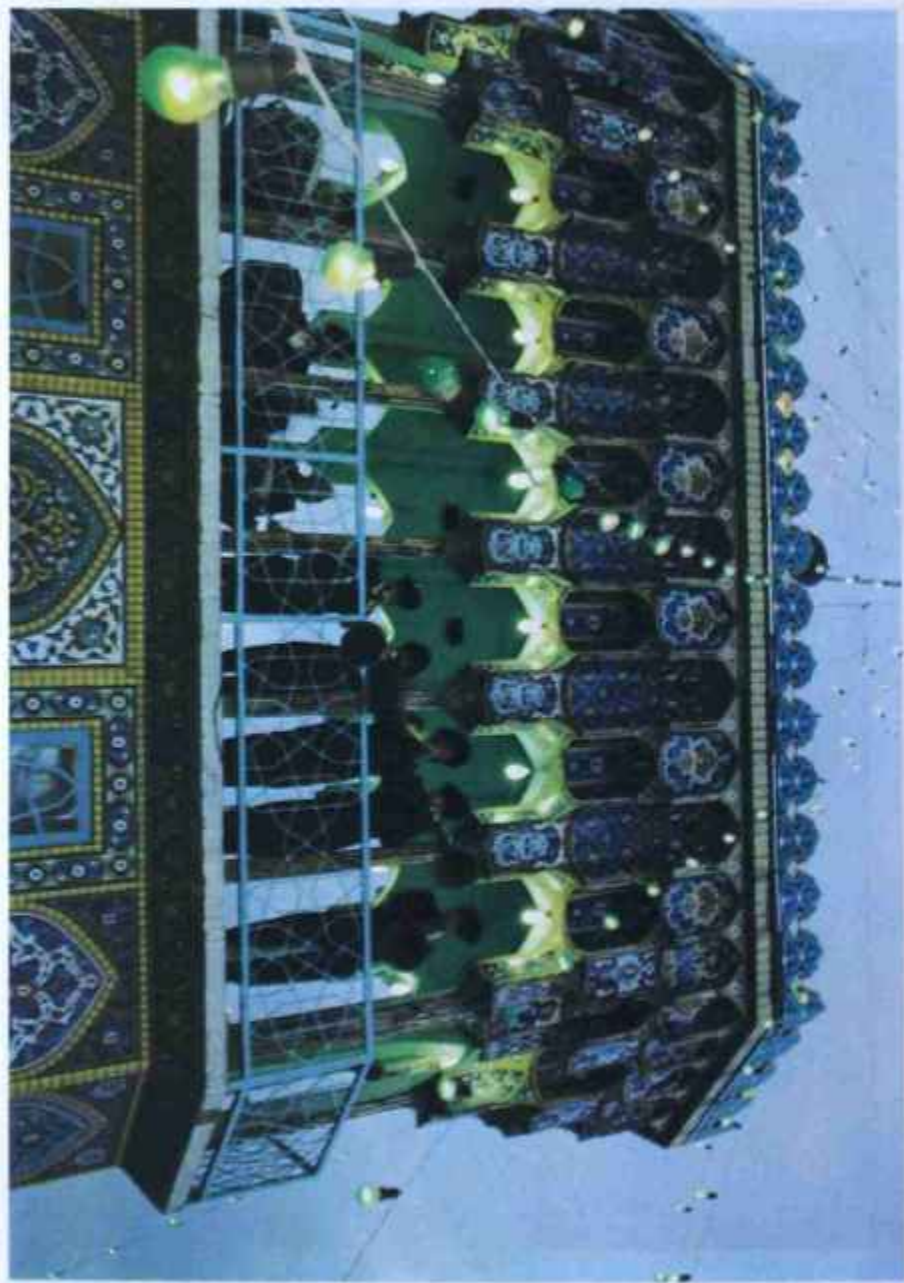
Ivan of Azadi Courtyard.



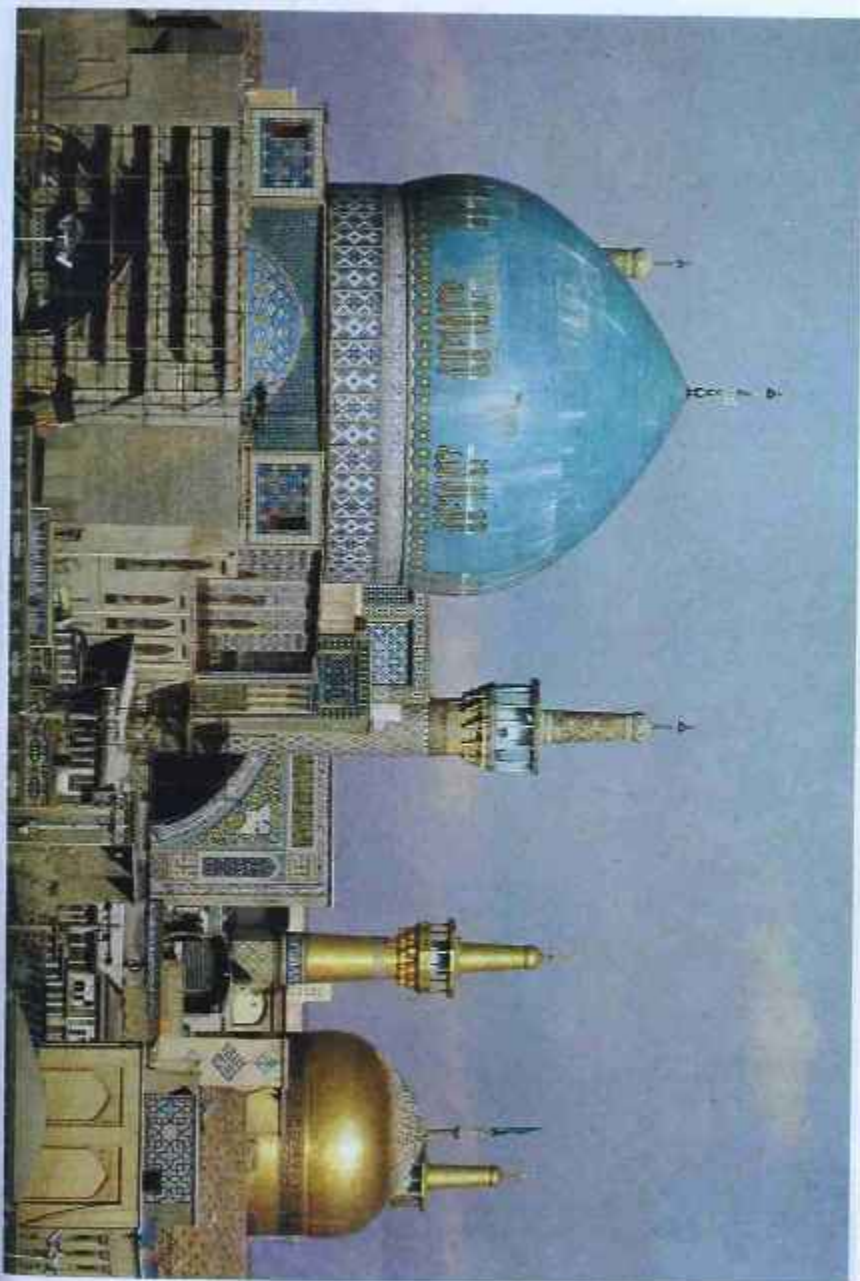
Ivan of Enqelab Courtyard.



Tomb of Shaykh Bahai



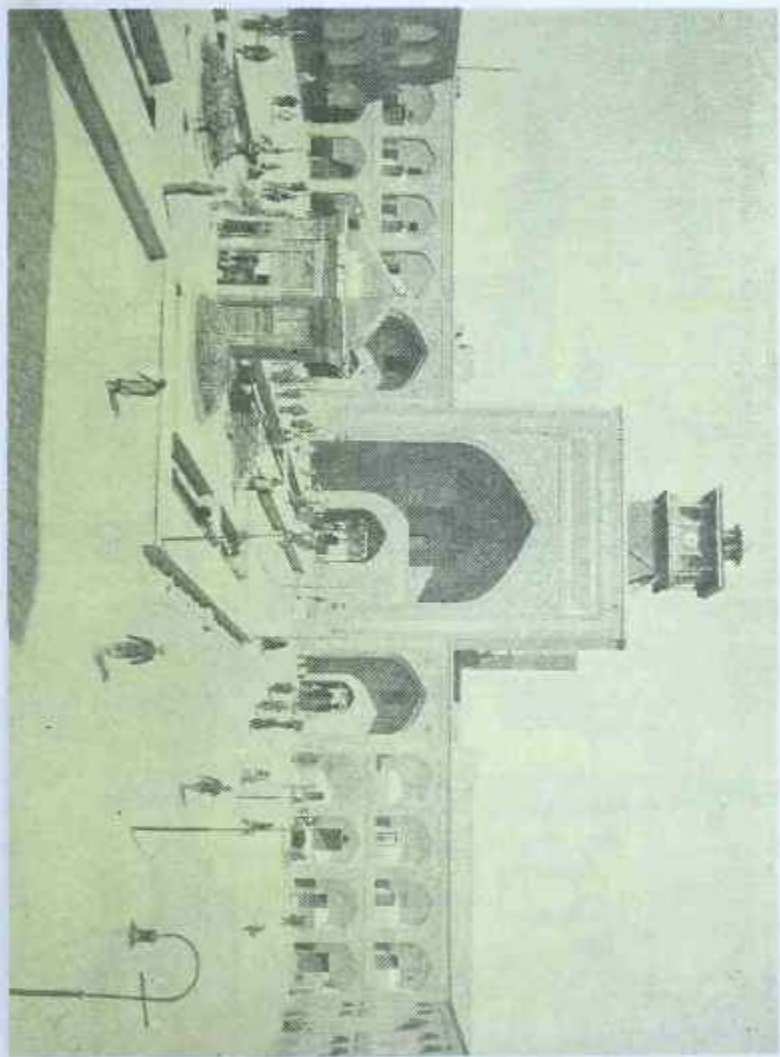
The Neqqar Khaneh



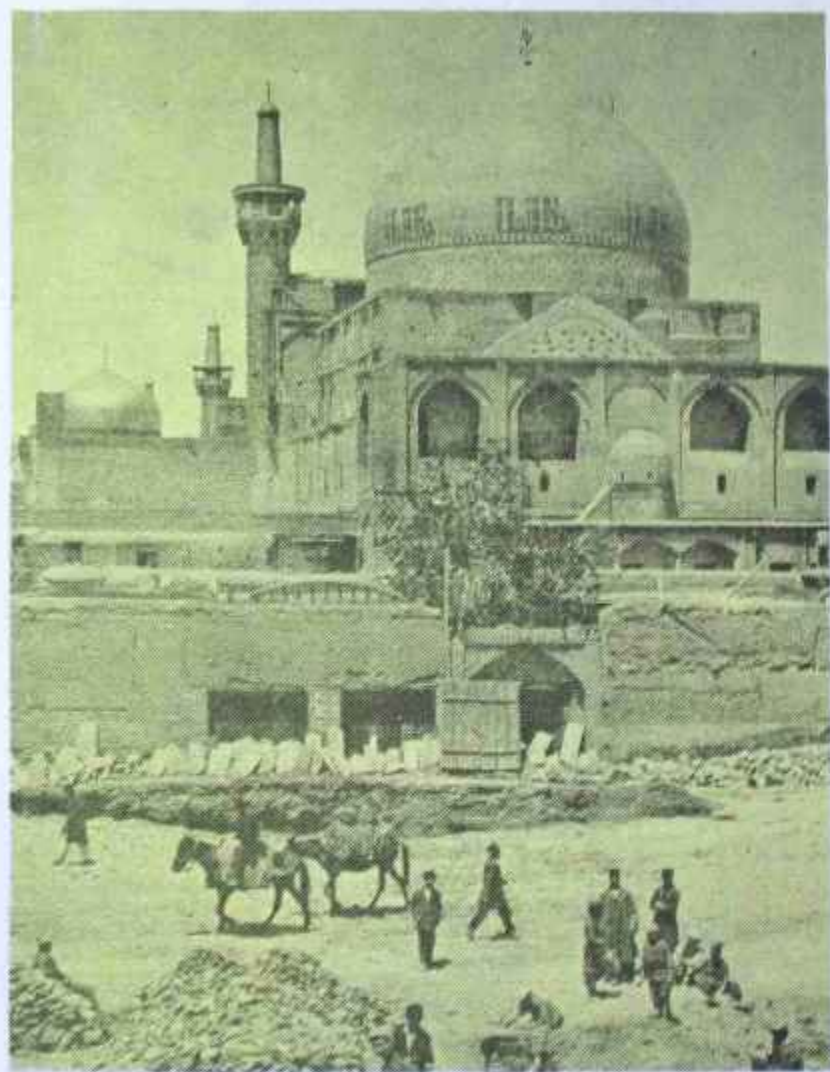
The Turquoise dome of Gowhar Shad Mosque facing the golden dome of the shrine.



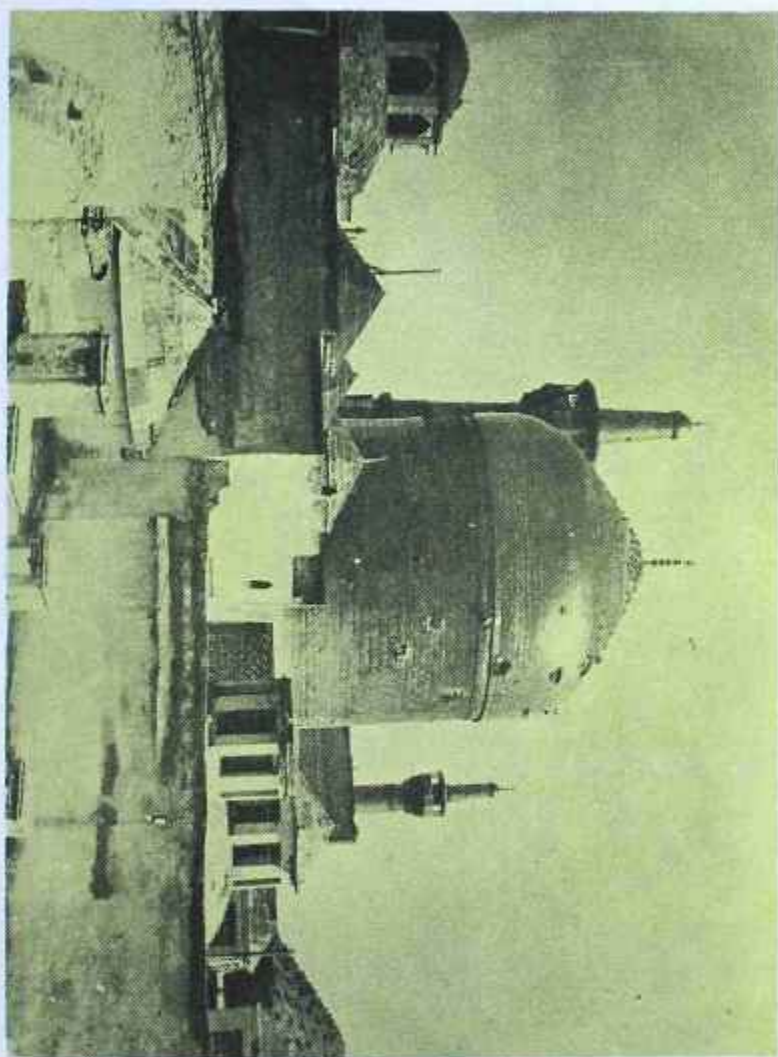
A view of Inqelab Courtyard at sunset, with the Saqqa-Khaneh in the foreground and Ivan-e-Talai Naderi which leads into the shrine in the background.



A view of Inqelab Courtyard during the years
1316-1318 (1936 - 1939 AD)



**The renovations around the Gowhar Shad Mosque,
approximate date 1910 (AD)**



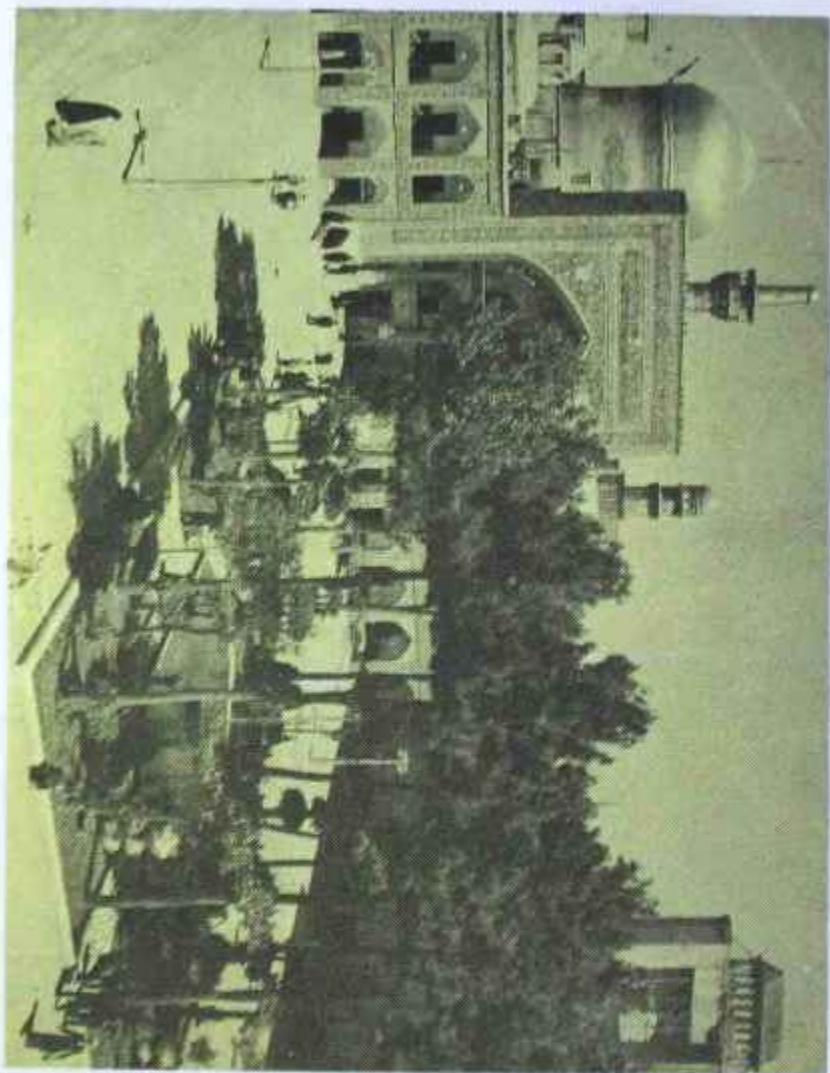
A view of the shrine and damage to blessed dome.
The damaged was due to cannon attack by the forces
of Czar. The photo was taken a day after the disaster,
1290 (1911 AD).



An 'Old Steel Zareeb' built during the Qajar dynasty (Fateh Ali Shah Qajar) 1328 (1949 AD), which is presently kept in the shrine museum.



Due to an earth quake in 1315 (1936) the upper part of minaret of Gowhar Shad Mosque was ruined.



A view of Azadi Courtyard 1346 (1967 AD),





The Zareeh over the blessed tomb

